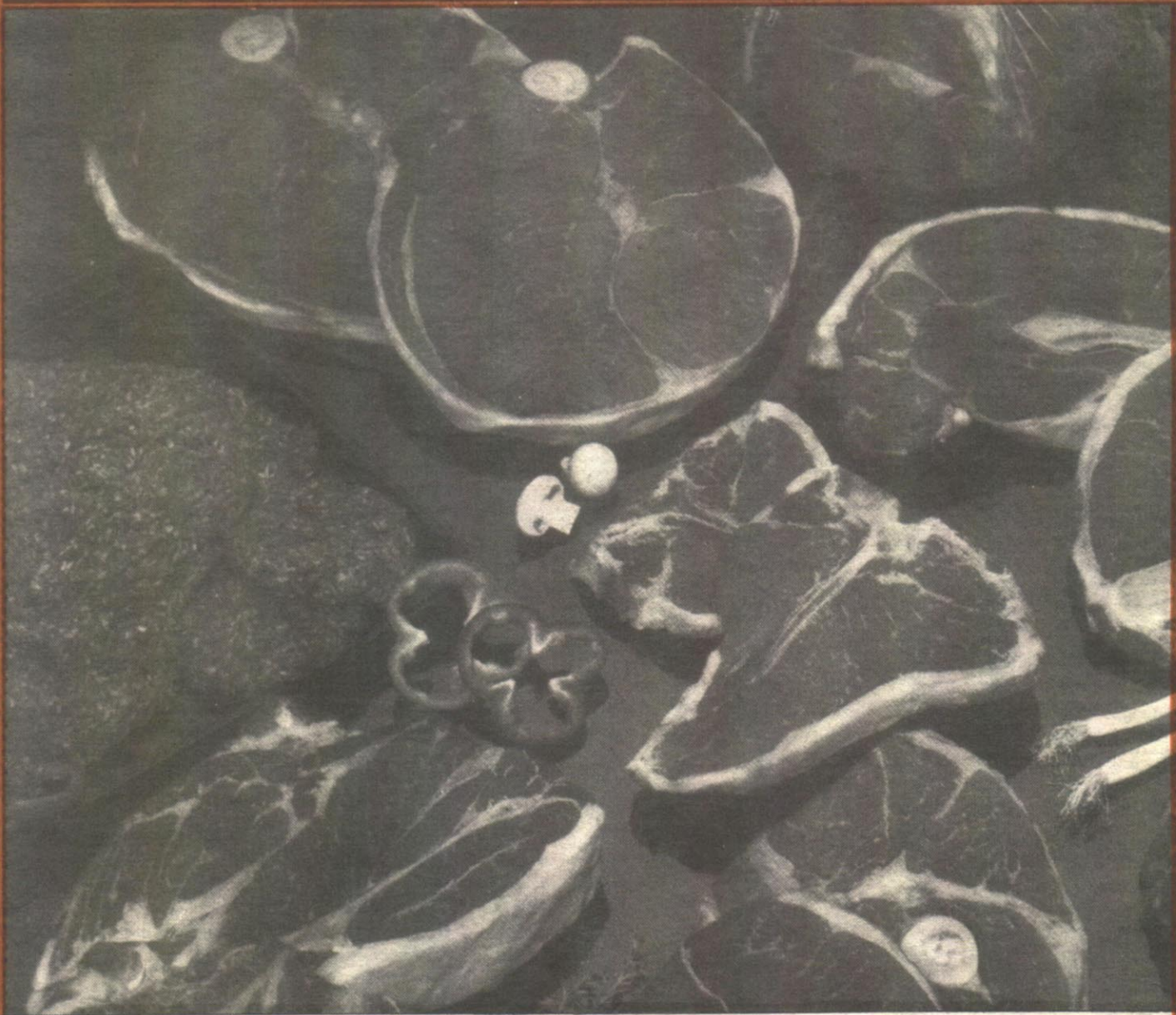


Return of
*The
Jungle*

Meatpacking is now
a bloody economic
battleground.
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Peter Hannan

Mexico still held in PRI's firm grip

By Michael Tangeman

MEXICO CITY

Post-election charges of fraud by opposition parties and violent protests by the conservative National Action Party (PAN) have marred the results of Mexico's July 7th mid-term elections, in which the ruling Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI) faced its strongest challenge to date. The conservative party's inflated claims that it would win at least two of seven state governorships and a clear majority in the national Chamber of Deputies—it previously held only 51 of 400 seats—set the stage for the violence that threatens to spread throughout the northern border states.

But a return to a 50 percent rate of abstention by Mexican voters has taken some of the wind out of the PAN's sails and some attention from the usual vote manipulation, giving the PRI room to "maneuver" during a crucial one-week period of vote tabulation. With two-thirds of the vote counted, the Federal Electoral Commission announced early Monday morning (July 15) that the PRI had won 67 percent of the vote, retaining all but five of its 300 majority seats in the Chamber of Deputies and winning all seven of the gubernatorial races.

The PAN was awarded 15 percent of the vote and three federal deputy seats from the northern states of Chihuahua and Durango. The left opposition parties had a poor showing in the election, and charged that the government siphoned off their votes to the pseudo-left, PRI "satellite" parties that support the ruling party in the Chamber. The Mexican Unified Socialist Party (PSUM) was awarded only 3.1 percent of the vote, while the Mexican Workers Party (PMT) and the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) both were given less than 1.5 percent and may lose their registrations as a result.

Until recently such elections posed no real threat to the "official party" which has ruled since 1929 without losing a national or state election. The PRI was able for years to depend on Mexico's high economic growth rate as proof of its legitimacy, controlling dissent with a masterful blend of cooptation, coercion and suppression.

But with the onset of the international recession and the drop of petroleum prices on the world market at the end of the '70s, the country's economic difficulties changed that scenario. Since 1980, the PRI has faced electoral challenges at the local and regional levels by the PAN in the north and in the southern and urban areas from the left—principally the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) before 1981 and then, following its merger with four other left parties, as the Mexican Unified Socialist Party.

The 1982-83 balloting showed that the worsening economic situation was transforming the public's disenchantment into what political scientist Soledad Loaeza termed an unprecedented "electoral uprising." The PAN won 17.9 percent of the vote in the 1982 election, while it tripled its share of the vote in local elections from 6.3 percent to 16.5 percent in 1983. The PSUM won nearly 5 percent of the vote in the 1982 presidential election and increased its share of the votes from 1.7 percent in 1980 (as the PCM) to 2.9 percent in the 1983 local elections—a distant third, but still indicative of discontent with the government.

Prior to the July 7 balloting, all indications pointed to a public disenchanted with the government's inability to pull the country out of the economic doldrums or deliver the "moral renovation" of the government promised by the president. Mexico's foreign debt has topped \$69 billion and the drop in the market price of oil is costing the country dearly in foreign export earnings—\$400 million in the first trimester of 1985, according to Finance Secretary Jesus Silva Herzog. A recent 18 percent increase in the minimum wage has done little to help the working class combat inflation, estimated at more than 60 percent last year.

According to political analyst Carlos Pereyra, the economic crisis increased politicization of both the right and the left, but political parties have not been successful across the board in turning that into ballots. While the PAN has been able to channel the discontent of the right into votes, on the left the crisis has given rise to independent *campesino* and worker movements in the countryside and the "colonias

populares" (urban shantytowns). The repudiation of the PRI by these movements is so strong, according to Pereyra, "that at times it reaches the dimensions of rejection of all party politics."

A strange party.

The PAN, in addition to being the major challenger to the PRI in recent years, is something of an oddity on the Mexican political scene. Unlike any other Mexican party, the PAN apparently lacks an active rank and file and has no permanent national infrastructure. Lacking grassroots support, the party more resembles a political pressure group at the service of its directorate—almost exclusively businessmen—than it does a traditional Mexican politician party. Nevertheless, through its alliances with the conservative Catholic Church hierarchy and entrepreneurs and the assistance of "intermediate communities"—parent and youth organizations, professional and business groups—the party has been effective in capturing the middle-class vote in the conservative north.

The left opposition—the PSUM, the non-Marxist PMT, the Trotskyist PRT—has had some success through election-time alliances with the independent *campesino* and worker movements. The PMT has most of its strength among workers, students and youth in poorer neighborhoods. The party was formed in 1974 by a group of independent leftists led by Heberto Castillo, a university professor jailed in 1968 for his involvement with the student movement. Populist and nationalist, the party was denied registration until 1984 and the July 7 balloting was its first electoral contest. Observers say the low number of votes awarded the PMT reflect the government's desire to keep the outspoken Castillo out of the Chamber.

The Trotskyist PRT had a difficult time matching the excitement of its 1982 presidential campaign, when it ran as its candidate the popular Rosario Ibarra, a 58-year-old housewife-turned-human-rights-activist. Formed in 1976 as the Mexican section of the 4th International, the PRT is strong in various pockets of the country and is the only party strongly to support gay rights. Ibarra—who is president of the National Front Against Repression (FNCR) and not a Trotskyist herself—was the PRT's foremost candidate for the Chamber in the July 7 election. As is the case with Castillo, observers say the government would like to keep the vocal human rights advocate out of the legislature.

Left unity hope.

Initially seen as a new hope for left unity, the PSUM was well received by the electorate in 1982, winning 5 percent of the vote and 15 percent of the federal deputies. But the 3.1 awarded the Eurocommunist-aligned party in the mid-term elections reflects almost as much the internal divisions and diminished working-class support for the party as it does government vote manipulation. The party rank and file is now made up largely of the middle class, students and intellectuals.

In addition, a scandal that broke just days before the election seems to have damaged PSUM's image. Arnaldo Martínez Verdugo, PSUM central committee member and top candidate for the Chamber, was kidnapped July 1 by armed men claiming to be members of the Party of the Poor (PDLT), a guerrilla movement wiped out by the army in the early '70s and not heard from in 11 years. When the PDLT

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kidnapped the ex-governor of Guerrero in the early '70s, the Mexican Communist Party acted as intermediary in the transfer of ransom. Martínez Verdugo was PCM chairman at the time.

Martínez Verdugo's kidnappers claim—and the PSUM central committee has admitted—that some of the ransom money never reached PDLT leader Lucio Cabañas before he was killed. According to the PSUM, when the army wiped out the guerrillas, the PCN decided to "invest" the money in real estate to be able to return it "with interest" to the PDLT if the guerrillas ever re-formed. Former PDLT members granted amnesty in the late '70s have said that those now claiming to represent the PDLT are imposters, giving rise to speculation that the kidnapping is a move by the right to discredit the PSUM.

Post-election violence.

Meanwhile, PAN supporters are now taking to the streets in the northern states in the expected wave of post-election violence from the right. PAN critics charge that the party's campaign, with its brash claims that it would increase its share of the vote from 17 to 51 percent and win at least 150 majority seats in the chamber, was tailor-made for violent protest. In addition, they claim, the PAN protests in the northern border states will receive widespread coverage by the U.S. media, in concert with the pressure campaign by the Reagan administration against the government of President Miguel de la Madrid.

While the PAN protests in the north are troublesome for the ruling party, the government's real test will be spread out over the next several months, when the effect of a new 35 percent peso devaluation and a further drop in the price of oil will be felt. The Mexican economy appears headed for another major crisis, and while the PRI seems to have gotten off the hook with the help of abstentionism in the elections, how it handles the country's economic woes may well be the key to the ruling party's future.

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7
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IN THESE TIMES

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Marcos threatens to call in U.S.

By James B. Goodno

MANILA

PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT FERDINAND Marcos dropped a political bombshell recently, setting off another round of demands for his resignation. He suggested he would ask for a commitment of U.S. ground troops if the left-lead insurgency "gets out of control."

The statement, made during a May 28 interview with France's Gamma TV, was seen as another sign that Philippine politics and society will continue to be militarized for some time to come. It also indicates Marcos' continued insistence on taking on the banned National Democratic Front (NDF) and its main components, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA), on the battlefield, despite pleas from his moderate and conservative foes to negotiate with an eye to legalizing the CPP.

Marcos' threat was followed up with an unprecedented show of military might during a June 12 parade of government troops and military hardware marking Philippine Independence.

The 67-year-old president, who came to office 20 years ago, continues to express confidence in his troops' ability to meet the NPA challenge. During the Gamma interview, Marcos said he would invoke a mutual defense treaty only "if infiltration and subversion is so massive" as to warrant "the entry of foreign troops into our country." Presidential and military spokesmen say that only if there is overwhelming evidence of foreign aid reaching the rebels—aid amounting to intervention—will American troops be requested.

Acting Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos says encounters between his troops and the NPA are up between 10 to 15 percent over last year. Perhaps more startling is his revelation that 10 or 11 individuals are being killed daily in incidents involving the NPA or the smaller Muslim Moro National Liberation Front.

These incidents are no longer limited to such traditional hot spots as Mindanao, Samar, Bicol and the Cordillera mountains

of northern Luzon. Now they are taking place in the president's Ilocos region, Negros, including its capital city, Bacolod, and even in Metro Manila.

"Where I come from there is not a danger of civil war—that war is actually happening," says Pablito Sanchez, a leader of the Ilocos conservative opposition United Nationalist Democratic Organization.

Some of the U.S.' largest overseas military bases are in the Philippines. Ranking U.S. government officials often visit the capital of this former American colony. These visits are seen as an indication of

Both met with Marcos in his Malacañang Palace office.

"I personally doubt that foreign troops are the answer to an insurgency problem," Armacost said during a press conference prior to his departure. "Particularly in the absence of active foreign support being provided to what is an internal security problem."

(Current consensus is that while the NDF, which includes between 12-20,000 armed regulars in the NPA, is improving its links with political parties and organizations abroad, including some close to the

Soviet Union, it receives little more than moral support.)

Analysts here and in the U.S. are concerned about the inclusion of a specific reference to the Philippines in the Defense Department's report. "We support the Philippines' intentions to combat an increasingly violent insurgency," reads the report. Commenting on this, *The Nation's* defense correspondent Michael Klare wrote recently, "Given that America's war in Vietnam was justified in this way, the mention of the Philippines—not found in earlier Pentagon reports—should be taken as an early warning."

The U.S. maintains five major and several smaller military installations in the Philippines. Some 14,000 American troops

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Universal Press Syndicate

U.S. concern over the protracted crisis. Specific reference to the Philippines in the current U.S. Defense Department annual report is viewed as potentially more ominous.

Among recent visitors to Manila are CIA Director William Colby and Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Michael Armacost, a former ambassador to the country.

Philippine President Marcos' threat was followed up by a show of military might in an Independence parade of military hardware and government troops.

Filipinos welcome Falwell

To get to Manila Jerry Falwell's fundamentalist road show traveled about as far as possible from its Virginia base without utilizing the space shuttle. But despite the distance, the television preacher and darling of the hardened New Right was among friends. His anti-Communist message brought shouts of "amen" from audiences of born-again businessmen, professionals and executives.

Together they bowed their heads in prayer. The 51-year-old Baptist minister, his entourage of fair-haired gospel singers, burly body guards and painfully polite public relations men, 500 Filipinos and scores of pink-skinned missionaries prayed for the well-being of President Ferdinand Marcos, his wife Imelda and for deliverance from Satanic Communism during a gathering July 1.

Despite the frigid air-conditioning, they were sweating. Some wiped tears from their eyes. Heads were buried in hands. Eyes closed in concentration. Faces revealed a strange mix of absolute pleasure and terrible pain. There was an aura of quiet fanaticism around the room.

"The Philippines and the United States. We have something very important in common. We are born free!" The preacher's Southern accent boomed through the cavernous ballroom. His prac-

ticed delivery and tent-show cadences held the rapt attention of even the curious and the tired. "This meeting could not be held in Peking. It could not be held in Moscow. Not in Havana nor in Managua today. Thank God we are born free!"

This appearance was before the Philippines' first "national prayer breakfast" in the Manila Hilton, sponsored by the Christian Businessmen Evangelism Fellowship. It was the Moral Majority head's first public appearance in Manila.

Falwell, who claims a TV following of 25 million households and a Moral Majority membership of 6.5 million American families, promised to lobby in Washington for increased support for the government of the Philippines. Later, when asked by *In These Times*, he said he would use his influence to support direct U.S. military intervention "if the Republic of the Philippines is ready to fall into Communist hands."

"The march of Communism and Marxism-Leninism cannot be stopped unless countries like yours and ours stick together," Falwell said during his morning address. "If the Philippines does not remain free, God help us in America."

Falwell's appeal was a mixture of conservative idealism and pragmatic politics. The Communist value system is an-

tagonistic to that of Christians, he said. Communists do not value life, he added before launching into a tirade on abortion and the breakdown of the family. In the same speech he said the Philippines is vital to U.S. interests in the South Pacific region.

"The future of the U.S. and the Philippine Islands are personally intertwined," said Falwell. Along with South Africa, South Korea and Israel, the Philippines constitutes a bulwark against Communism. The governments of these countries deserve American support to stem "this awful tide that originates in the Kremlin."

"He doesn't know anything about Communism in the Philippines," whispered a Filipino journalist upon hearing this. But Falwell wasn't interested in subtleties that stood in the way of his easily understood analysis. He was not concerned about the long history of antagonism between the Communist Party of the Philippines and the Soviet Union. He was not about to concede that poverty or dissatisfaction with 20 years of Marcos rule were behind the growing popularity of the left.

"The Marxists have a goal," said Falwell during a meeting with members of the press. "It is world conquest. This country is a means to an end. The end is world conquest."

Christians have the duty to support the government unless it runs counter to biblical laws, according to Falwell. The countries that do that are the Communist coun-

tries. The Philippines, Falwell said repeatedly, is a democracy.

"Socialism," said Falwell, "is nothing but mutually shared poverty. Free enterprise is a God-given right much as free speech or free assembly. Society should be compassionate, but those who work mustn't be made to support those who can but choose not to," he said.

The Philippines is often referred to as "the only Christian nation in Asia." More than 80 percent of its 54 million citizens are Roman Catholic. Another 10 percent belong to other Christian churches. About 1 percent are Baptists or otherwise fundamentalists.

Yet the Baptists are growing in influence. American and Filipino missionaries bring the message to the countryside. Conservative evangelical messages are broadcast over several national TV networks.

The Baptists view themselves as a line of defense against the encroachment of Communism—especially since they see the increasing influence of liberation theology in the Roman Catholic and other churches.

"We thank you Americans for sending missionaries," says Reneo Albano, president of the Christian Businessmen Evangelism Fellowship. "Either you send us missionaries now or send us soldiers later. Send us Bibles or send us guns."

-J.B.G.

INSHORT

Beth Maschinot

No entry

A year-long anti-apartheid strike in Dublin—at the Henry Street branch of the Dunnes supermarket and clothing chain—has precipitated a row between the Irish, British and South African governments. Accusations concerning a possible breach of international air transport codes and the establishment of new visa regulations began on July 8, when six of the eight strikers travelling to South Africa were held up by British Airways in London and then denied entry into South Africa at Johannesburg. Until now, the South African government has not required entry visas for either British or Irish citizens. According to the *Irish Times*, Irish Labor Party chairman Michael D. Higgins claims that the incident confirms cooperation between British intelligence, the airline company and South African intelligence. Irish Minister for Labor Ruari Quinn has called for Irish government sanctions against South Africa. Whatever the diplomatic outcome, the strikers—who were invited to spend the first anniversary of the strike in South Africa by Bishop Desmond Tutu—are determined to fight on.

"It all started out on the 19th of July last year when I refused to serve a woman buying two South African grapefruit," explains 21-year-old Mary Manning. When the Dunnes management suspended Manning for implementing her union's policy (a boycott on the handling of all South African goods) other members of the Irish Distributive and Administrative Trade Union (IDATU) walked out. Despite the union's attempts to negotiate, there is a deadlock with Dunnes over the union's "right of conscience" clause.

For these strikers, a year on the picket line hasn't been easy. Their strike benefit pay of \$25 per week doesn't go very far. And some of these young people were the sole breadwinner in their family. Unemployment, particularly among those in their late teens or early 20s is very high in Ireland. There are no other jobs to go to.

Reports that the eight strikers were held by soldiers with submachine guns for 10 hours has caused outrage in Ireland. Shop steward Karen Gearon says they were treated like animals. But Brendan Archbold of IDATU says the attempt to intimidate will not work. Back on the picket line, the strikers are prepared to wait as long as it takes.

Travel notes

With President Reagan taking slaps at Greece for its "lax security measures" at the Athens airport, Greek officials are responding with hard facts. According to the Athens News Agency, in a letter to Secretary of State George Shultz, Foreign Minister Yannis Haralambopoulos called the U.S. travel advisory "unjustified and unfair, and damaging to Greek interests." He pointed out that a recent report from the International Air Transport Association—which included U.S. delegates—found that "the security measures at Athens Airport fully meet the established standards of other countries." Haralambopoulos added that there have been only two hijackings from Greece in the last few years, "compared to the great number of hijackings which have, unfortunately, taken place in other countries, including the U.S."

While Reagan pretends his travel policy has nothing to do with his dislike of Greece's recent course of independence from the U.S., some Greek-American groups in the U.S. weren't so easily persuaded. The Federation of Greek Associations in New York is calling on Greek-Americans to contribute to a fund to counter the anti-Greek sentiment that's been promulgated by the administration and followed by much of the U.S. media since the hijacking.

Now you see it...

When is an embargo not an embargo? Vermonters are beginning to scratch their heads and ask just that as their recent challenge to the banning of Nicaraguan imports went unheeded. Only July 14, more than 400 anti-embargo protesters from Vermont's No More Killing in Our Name bought Nicaraguan crafts from their Canadian neighbors, paraded to the U.S. customs station in Highgate, Vt., and then declared the goods were for resale. Though in clear violation of the U.S. trade embargo on Nicaragua, customs officials let the



protesters through. First customs told the Canadian press that items less than \$50 were allowed under the embargo, then they clammed up when a package worth more than \$100 was declared.

According to David Lerner of the Center for Constitutional Rights, any Nicaraguan items brought into the country for resale break the embargo order. The embargo busters were liable for \$10,000 fines and up to five years in jail if customs had decided not to look the other way.

The Vermont embargo-busting had the support of Burlington Mayor Bernie Sanders. Sanders, however, was not present for the event—he was in Nicaragua at the invitation of Daniel Ortega celebrating the sixth anniversary of the revolution.

Animal attraction

Increasingly visionary theoretician Rudolf Bahro resigned from the German Greens at their national convention in Hagen June 23, complaining that they were becoming just a "normal party." Bahro followed

his companion Christine Schröter, who announced her resignation from the speaker's podium after the convention voted not to grant her yet another five-minute extension to continue her seemingly endless plea for a total ban on all experimental use of animals.

Dressed in ankle-length penitent's sackcloth, Schröter badly over-stated her case, going so far as to compare the laboratory slaughter of frogs and other animals to Auschwitz and Treblinka. This brought cries of protest from the auditorium. Her sudden announcement that she was leaving the Greens was greeted with applause.

After the uproar, the Greens adopted a resolution introduced by Sabine Bard on behalf of the newly rotated batch of Greens in the Bundestag calling for a moratorium on animal experimentation pending critical investigation and new legislation. The Greens agreed on a total ban on use of animals for military research on a range of fields such as cosmetics and science teaching, but left open the question of use of animals in such branches of medicine as immunization.

This week's contributors: Donna DeCesare and Diana Johnstone

MASSACHUSETTS

Dukakis leads attack on gay foster parents

By John Demeter

BOSTON

THE SCENE OUTSIDE WASHINGTON'S Shoreham Hotel on July 10 had a hauntingly familiar ring for Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis. As the nationally-touted liberal appeared before the Democratic Policy Commission, a picket organized by the Gay Activist Alliance, and including members of three other gay organizations, marched to protest a recent Dukakis administration decision banning the placement of foster children in gay and lesbian households. The Washington action marked expansion to the national level of opposition to the May 22 policy announcement. It was the highlight of a nine-week campaign by gays and lesbians in the governor's home state that has grown to include black community organizers, social service and day-care professionals, women's organizations and politicians among its supporters.

In recent weeks, Dukakis has faced a sit-in outside his State House office, two protest marches and rallies and numerous "Dukakis-watch" pickets at public appearances and fundraisers for his 1986 re-election campaign.

The foster-care policy was also at the forefront of issues addressed at the 15th annual Boston Lesbian and Gay Pride march on June 15. Many observers credited the controversy around the policy with attracting a record turnout of 27,000 for the march.

The announcement of the foster-care ruling by the governor and his Secretary of Human Services Philip Johnston was the first of its kind in the nation. On June 21, the fears of opponents that the policy would set a precedent for a "larger campaign of intolerance and bigotry" was partially confirmed as New Hampshire's Division for Children and Youth Services announced it was drafting a similar proposal. As in Massachusetts, the New Hampshire announcement followed media accounts sensationalizing the existence of gays in foster roles. In neither case was there charges or misconduct or abuse, but in the May 7 *Boston Globe* report, mention of "community opposition," a claim disputed by a mix of neighborhood leaders and local activists, served as the focus of the story.

In Boston, the public revelation of the placement of two brothers, aged two and three, in the Roxbury home of Don Babets and David Jean led to the children's removal by the Department of Social Services (DSS) the next day. The children had been placed in the Babets and Jean home after an 11-month inquiry by DSS, twice the normal investigatory period, and with full knowledge and approval of the children's natural mother. The boys had been in the home for two weeks before the story appeared and have since been moved twice to other settings. Rev. Graylan Ellis-Hagler, a black community leader and friend of the two men, sharply condemned the *Globe*'s "manufacturing" the controversy around the placement of the boys. He was joined by former Boston mayoral candidate Mel King and gay Boston City Councillor David Scondras, who represents the neighborhood, in claiming support from the vast majority of neighborhood residents for the integrity of the two men.

So quickly had events moved following the *Globe* article that the Dukakis policy statement (which he said expressed his personal views as well as public opinion) was outstripped by conservatives in the State House of Representatives who rushed to pass an amendment to the state budget two

days before the governor and his secretary could formally announce their policy. Led by homophobe and conservative Republican Royall H. Switzler, the House voted 112-28 in favor of a strongly worded amendment prohibiting the state from placing foster children with gays in "adoption, guardianship, foster care, family day care and respite care."

Not to be outdone, the liberal Dukakis, who has previously supported passage of a "gay rights" bill in the state, further announced that the "model foster care policy" was based on placement of children in "traditional" family settings of mother (as full-time homemaker), father and two or three children. He further described this situation as "ideal for a youngster, any youngster." One Republican, expressing his delight at the new policy and the governor's pronouncements, thanked Dukakis for "taking time out from Reagan-bashing to accept the view of the president and the vast majority of the American people that the traditional American family is a pillar of our society and certainly worth preserving." The *Boston Globe* added its praise for the governor in a May 28 editorial that proclaimed the announcement to be in "the best interests of the children."

In the aftermath of the removal of the two children, and while rumors circulated about a policy announcement, an ad hoc coalition of gay and lesbian supporters of Babets and Jean solicited support and organized a small rally on May 23 and a militant march and rally of 2,500 on the State House steps on May 29. Organizations such as the National Organization for Women, the National Association of Social Workers, service unions and supporters of "non-traditional" and alternative families joined the protest. Both rallies heard speaker after speaker attack the anti-gay hysteria (and later House vote) as unsubstantiated by any research or statistical information that gay parenting is harmful. Lesbian social worker Cathy Hoffman told the rally, "There is no kind of parenting that produces sexuality. Most of us are the products of heterosexual homes." Another speaker cited information that only 10 per-

cent of the families in the U.S. would fall under the "traditional" banner Dukakis and his secretary were citing.

Ellen Herman, representing Boston's 1,500-member Rainbow Coalition, stated that "Massachusetts has gambled on making people comfortable with their prejudices." Cindy Rizzo, of Gay and Lesbian Defenders (GLAD) said they only sought a policy allowing gay applicants to receive a "case by case analysis on individual merit."

While GLAD Director Kevin Cathcart has announced that the group is preparing a lawsuit against what he terms "a blatantly unconstitutional ruling," the state's chief law enforcement officer, State Attorney General Francis X. Bellotti revealed in a July 11 interview that he disagrees with the policy and would not personally defend it should it be challenged in court. While state officials deny the policy actually "bans" gay foster parents, the first public removal of a child from a gay foster placement was

revealed the same day.

At the time of the Washington picket, Dukakis was still offering "qualifications" to mollify sectors of the liberal coalition that had returned him to office in 1982 over conservative Democrat (and recent born-again Republican) Ed King. Despite the enlistment of Democrats Gloria Steinem, Geraldine Ferraro and U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, who have offered to lobby the governor, the prospects for change do not look encouraging. As one local lesbian activist summed it up, "I think it's a case of both unconscious homophobia on his part and a situation of the Democrats nationally trying to out-Republican the Republicans." Urging Democrats to withdraw support from Dukakis and others in his party who favor similar policies, Scondras angrily told the May 29 rally in Boston's Government Center, "They want our work, our money, our votes—but not us."

John Demeter is an editor of *Radical America*.

IN THE NATION



LABOR

Fremont UAW ratifies contract, welcomes Toyota

By Joan Walsh

FREMONT, CA

THE SAME WEEK THE UNITED AUTO Workers (UAW) ratified its first contract with the General Motors-Toyota joint venture here, rumors that Toyota will produce its own line of cars at the New United Motors Manufacturing, Inc. (NUMMI) plant finally found their way into print. Although the Japanese automaker wouldn't comment on a July 1 *Automotive News* report that Toyota will build 50,000 cars at Fremont next year, around the plant people are confident that by autumn Toyotas will be produced there along with Chevy Novas—the first Japanese cars built by UAW members.

No one's pointing to any direct cause and effect between UAW Local 2244's 92 percent contract ratification and Toyota's new plans. But the relative ease with which union leaders and members accepted the

unorthodox first contract had to calm Toyota management's fears about labor relations at NUMMI—and at independent ventures. A Toyota operation, with a likely increase in plant employment, would seem to reward the UAW's compromising attitude toward the Japanese-imported management techniques introduced at NUMMI.

The first UAW-NUMMI contract might best be compared to the renovated GM plant that houses the NUMMI operation: it's the shell of a new venture, but it's still not clear what will go on inside. The contract's wage and benefit provisions were a victory for the union, bringing NUMMI workers up to parity with the rest of the auto industry. Local and international UAW leaders are also hailing the contract's language on work standards, union representation and job security. But they acknowledge that questions remain about the role the new agreement—which stresses labor-management consensus—will actually provide the union.

To win NUMMI recognition, the UAW agreed to grant management unprecedented hiring, work-rule and representation flexibility in the new venture (see *In These Times*, April 17). From the outset, the union had to give up hope of finding NUMMI jobs for the entire-GM Fremont workforce. The plant, which once provided jobs for 7,000, will employ a projected 2,500. Of those 2,500 jobs, NUMMI only pledged that a "majority plus one" would go to Fremont veterans, though so far 90 percent of the 1,200 hired are laid-off GM workers.

The union also agreed to a drastically reduced number of job classifications in the plant, and to organizing employees into teams and groups in which members' jobs and responsibilities would often overlap. That flexibility was expected to make per-worker productivity at NUMMI 60 percent higher than the U.S. industry average. Most troubling to the UAW: a shop floor-union presence was never guaranteed.

The new contract allays some of those concerns. NUMMI's frank emphasis on extraordinary productivity made work standards an important bargaining frontier and the agreement institutionalizes one major gesture to worker autonomy: employees are guaranteed the right to stop the assembly line if they can't perform their task within

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By Vivienne Walt

NEW YORK

WE HAVE PROGRAMS, such as in my own state of California, to teach refugee women how to shop in our enormous American supermarkets," boasted Maureen Reagan to the Geneva meeting in May of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, speaking as head of the U.S. delegation to this week's UN Decade for Women conference in Nairobi, Kenya. "To a woman coming to the United States for the first time, I can imagine what a sight [the supermarket] must be."

But when the going gets tough, not all the tough go shopping, and the remark did little to win the hearts of hostile African and Palestinian refugees, who were more keen to talk about land rights and civil war.

In the months of preparatory meetings for the Nairobi conference, Maureen Reagan has stood firm against including any statements about Zionism and apartheid in the conference documents, arguing that the conference should stick strictly to "women's issues," and leave the political ones to other forums.

It is a debate she is unlikely to win in the UN, where, as anyone who has spent time listening to the lengthy debates knows, questions concerning the production of postage stamps can sometimes hang on some subtle point about the Balfour Declaration.

The Nairobi conference, which marks the end of the UN's Decade for Women, is the biggest international women's conference we have yet seen. About 12,000 women arrived for the Non Government Organizations (NGO) Forum on July 8. Another 2,500 government-appointed delegates—about a third of them men—squeezed into the Kenyatta International Conference Center to "Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade...."

The U.S. delegation, appointed by an administration that faces enormous hostility within the UN, has become the center of much pre-conference argument, seen by other delegates as defending unpopular American foreign policies. The viewpoint is not unjustified; the delegation is very much an amalgum of women faithful to President Reagan. Aside from fathering the chief American delegate, the president launched at least 10 of the other 35 on their political careers:

- Nancy Clark Reynolds, appointed by Reagan in 1981 as U.S. representative to the UN Commission on the Status of Women after she had served as his special assistant in Sacramento.

- Jeanne Kirkpatrick, appointed by Reagan in 1981 as U.S. ambassador to the UN and to the cabinet. This senior fellow of the American Enterprise Institute initially expressed enthusiasm about going to Nairobi, but now, says her office, she is "on a personal and working holiday." Private consultant David Carmen believes she will be "in the South of France"; delegation coordinator Paula Kuzmich says, "She'll be in the area [of Nairobi]," but on call if needed. Whatever the case, her absence is surely a blow to Maureen Reagan, who was relying on her standing within the UN to balance the inexperience of other American delegates.

- Margaret Heckler, appointed by Reagan as secretary of health and human services in 1983, has since gained fame by indelicately carving away at social services. She is also known on Capitol Hill for her inability to make up her mind, particularly on issues regarding disarmament and arms production.

- Linda Chavez, appointed by Reagan this year as White House public liaison director, because, said Donald Regan, "she's done an excellent job in civil rights." As staff director at the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, she pooh-poohed the notion of comparable worth payment as "a scheme for distributing the wealth of this country" and opposed affirmative action programs in higher education, which, she said, had "coincided" with "a general decline in



Rothco



Margaret Heckler (left) and Jeanne Kirkpatrick—both members of the American UN delegation to Nairobi.

Der Spiegel

NAIROBI CONFERENCE

U.S. delegation holds the line for Reagan

academic standards." As a Hispanic American, Chavez told a *Washington Post* reporter: "People...don't believe America is a racist society and I sure don't believe it is."

- Alan Lee Kayes, appointed by Reagan as U.S. representative to the UN Economic and Social Council, Keyes is the only male delegate and one of three blacks.

- Lenora Cole Alexander, appointed by Reagan in 1981 to direct the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau.

- Barbara Mahone, appointed by Reagan in 1983 to chair the Federal Labor Relations Authority covering more than two million federal employees, on the basis of her experience as director of Human Resources Management of the Chevrolet-Pontiac Group in Michigan.

- Patricia Diaz Dennis, appointed by Reagan in 1983 to the National Labor Relations Board, and former assistant general attorney for ABC. Dennis, with her background in management representation, is nevertheless regarded as a "moderate" and "not like [Donald] Dotson" by people working at the NLRB.

- Donna Alvarado, appointed by Reagan to direct ACTION, which coordinates volunteer activities within the U.S., and a member of his Task Force on Legal Equity for Women.

- Jeri Winger, appointed by Reagan to his Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives, and a member of numerous boards, including the Sears Roebuck Foundation, Utah Lung Association and Keep America Beautiful.

Among the other public-spirited delegates is Holland Coors of Colorado, a founding member of Citizens for America, which aims to lobby in every congressional district for a free market, anti-Communist domestic and foreign policy.

None of this should startle us, however. "Any delegation is a tied delegation," says Vivian Derrick, program director of the National Democratic Institute in Washington, D.C. "You sign on and you have to tow the government line."

But the U.S. faces particular isolation in the UN at Nairobi. At the mid-decade 1980

conference in Copenhagen, to which Derrick was a delegate, the U.S., Israel, Australia and Canada voted against the resulting plan of action, principally because it included references to Zionism as a form of racism. Sensing the delegation's political loneliness, Maureen Reagan has insisted on taking the plan-of-action document on consensus rather than voting, giving any country virtual veto power.

Anything mentioning apartheid, Zionism, the New International Economic Order or the "structural imbalances" behind the world recession have been "bracketed" in the document. "We can't put these extraneous issues in there which we've never been able to agree on," says delegate Corrie Francke of Missouri. "There are also things the Third World doesn't want discussed—like female circumcision."

So the delegates flew to Nairobi with no agreed upon rules of procedure, having voted not to vote beforehand on whether or not to vote or come to consensus. "The U.S. is going to have an uphill battle this time," said Derrick, who was a delegate to the 1980 conference in Copenhagen. Having major political figures among the delegates "is very high risk—[the delegation] is going to be getting major publicity, and if it turns sour...."

In fact, things are already quite rancid between the U.S. and the Third World at the UN. "The UN costs the back end of a submarine," says one UN official. But

Maureen Reagan, U.S. delegation head, is against taking a stand on apartheid in conference documents.

since the U.S. is paying one-quarter of a back end that is hostile to its foreign policies, it has begun making major cuts in its funding.

Last month Kansas Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (who, like Kirkpatrick, is an absent member of the U.S. delegation to Nairobi) sponsored an amendment to the State Department authorization legislation cutting U.S. contributions to the UN and its specialized agencies. As Sen. Robert Kasten Jr. said in the *New York Times* recently, "The American people are entitled to expect more from many of those who call themselves friends and allies and who are quick to line up for a slice of our tax dollars."

Tough talk from the Heritage Foundation echoed current administration sentiments about the UN. In their backgrounder on Nairobi, they suggest that the U.S. "should exert its influence to shape an effective, businesslike conference that sticks strictly to an agenda dealing with women's issues. The only other option is withdrawal...." They also advised "tight controls on entry visas into Kenya to exclude the most radical of prospective delegates and observers (such as those from the PLO)...."

The U.S. delegates never publicly dissociated themselves from the report, and by and large their actions have not been unlike the Heritage Foundation's guidelines.

But the U.S. delegates in Nairobi are not puppets of the New Right back home. Rather, they are the New Women: devoutly Republican, strongly suspicious of any challenge to free enterprise, cynical about social welfare and ardent supporters of national defense. And they talk about "women's rights" and "equality between the sexes" as their guiding principle.

For Maureen Reagan, the group is a dream come true. Last year she told the press she wanted to create a GOP caucus of "women who can stand up at a press conference and say that we, too, are the women's movement and this is our choice."

Reagan calls herself a feminist, supported the ERA (as did Kirkpatrick) and is pro-choice (as is Heckler). She would probably have been appalled at the gleeful statement by Jack Willke, president of the Right to Life Organization (which ran NGO workshops in Nairobi), when he told a reporter before the conference: "Anti-lifers have had it their way for the last few decades. Now we have a strong group [in Nairobi]."

At the very least, Nairobi could present us with a new force in women's politics in this country: the conservative feminist. ■ Vivienne Walt writes frequently on southern Africa.

By David Goodman

WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

ON JUNE 17 SOUTH AFRICA installed a new interim government in Namibia. The new body, composed of six so-called internal parties in the territory, is known collectively as the Multi-Party Conference (MPC).

The "inauguration" of the new leaders was greeted by about 4,000 Namibian protesters who, in turn, were met by police attacks that sent 71 people to the hospital. The maneuver to install the new puppet leadership came as a surprise to American officials when it was announced by South African State President P.W. Botha in mid-April. But it has long been predicted by Namibians: yet another ploy by South Africa to forestall internationally recognized independence for Namibia.

Namibia has been the prized possession of several colonial powers for more than 100 years. Germany first claimed it in the late 19th century, only to have the country handed over in 1919 to South Africa by the League of Nations as punishment for Germany's having been on the losing side in World War I. South Africa has ruled over Namibia since that time, in violation of numerous UN votes revoking South Africa's colonial mandate and in defiance of a World Court decision in 1971 ruling South Africa's occupation to be illegal. In 1978, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 435, supposedly with South African approval. Resolution 435 is the international blueprint for independence for Namibia. It calls for free and fair elections to be held inside the territory, and for the use of a UN peacekeeping force to oversee the withdrawal of troops of the South African Defense Forces (SADF) and the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO). But South African stalling and American insistence that Namibian independence be linked to a Cuban troop withdrawal from neighboring Angola has prevented implementation of Resolution 435. Today Namibia remains Africa's last colony.

SWAPO was founded in 1960, and quickly became the leading liberation movement in Namibia. In the mid-'70s the UN recognized SWAPO as the "sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people." And a recent leak from Pretoria admitted that South African intelligence knows a Resolution 435-style election in the territory would easily be won by SWAPO.

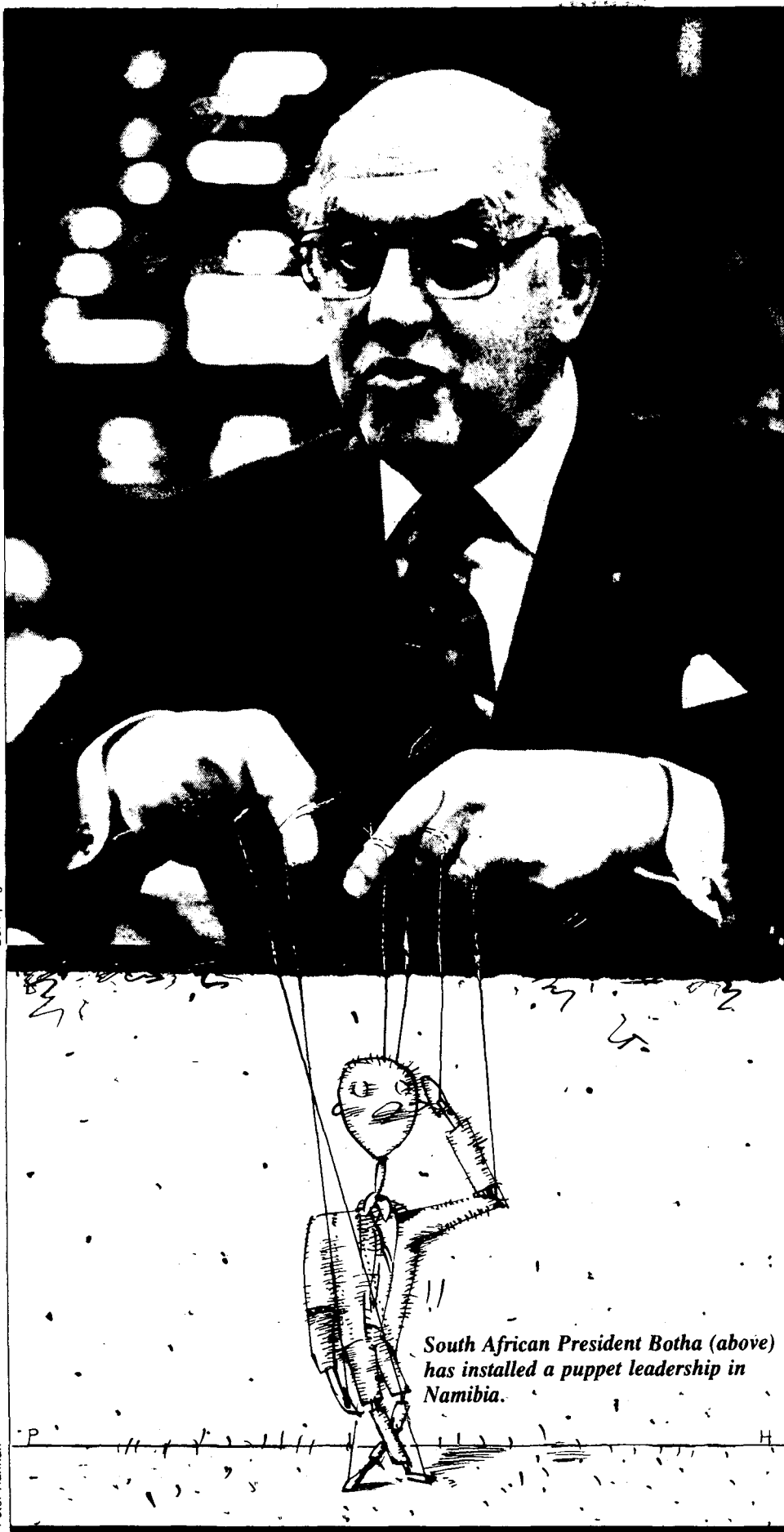
For nearly 20 years Namibian nationalists have been locked in struggle against South Africa. In 1966, after South Africa defied the first UN vote revoking its mandate to rule Namibia, SWAPO launched guerrilla actions to pressure Pretoria. The People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), the military wing of SWAPO, has been an effective force, as indicated by South Africa's current deployment of an estimated 100,000 troops in Namibia.

SWAPO is not officially banned in Namibia, but its activities are severely restricted and its leaders closely monitored. Following are interviews with three prominent members of the "home front leadership" of SWAPO. Nikko Bessinger (home front), Dan Tjongarero is the national vice chairman and Anton Lubowski is a white attorney in Windhoek who, in June 1984, became the first official white member of SWAPO.

What is the current state of the movement for independence?

Bessinger: Unfortunately, the U.S. and South Africa seem to have persuaded the Angolan government that the Cubans are an obstacle, and that with the Cuban presence in Angola, Namibia will not have independence.... As far as we're concerned, this issue is an artificially created obstacle.

Tjongarero: The present deadlock has been brought about by South African intransigence. They are strengthened by the U.S.' "constructive engagement" policy, which



NAMIBIA

SWAPO decries new interim government

is in effect a blank check for South Africa to do as it pleases. The U.S. State Department insistence on "linkage" has also strengthened them.

What are the origins of "linkage"?

Tjongarero: The new position of linkage came about because of Ronald Reagan's view that every liberation struggle around the world is part of a Soviet threat and is Communist-inspired. Reagan sees the world through red binoculars. This has continued to thwart desires for independence by the Namibian people. The aim of the U.S. is to have negotiations drag on in the hope that SWAPO will be defeated militarily. They hope for a political settlement between UNITA [the pro-Western South African-backed Angolan rebel movement led by Jonas Savimbi] and the MPLA [the Angolan government], which they hope would destroy PLAN. But I don't foresee Angola telling SWAPO either to stop fighting or to leave Angola, where we are not fighting.

What has been the effect of constructive engagement?

Bessinger: Constructive engagement has

taken us a little further away from our goal of realizing independence. Back in 1978 when Resolution 435 was passed we were much closer to independence than we are now. With Reagan's constructive engagement, we are dealing with the internal problems of Angola, not Namibian independence.

Tjongarero: We feel that the current stalemate in the negotiations has been brought on by American linkage, which is part of constructive engagement. It has now become the sole demand of South Africa in

"We [SWAPO] believe we have majority support, but there is only one way to test it: free elections."

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order to block the progress of the negotiations for the implementation of Resolution 435.

What is the state of armed struggle?

Tjongarero: One main goal is to force South Africa to come to terms. South Africa is talking to SWAPO as a result of armed struggle. They have negotiated with us since 1978 through a third party. For South Africa to concede that SWAPO is a legitimate force is a real accomplishment, an acknowledgement of SWAPO's effectiveness.

Conventional military victory over South Africa is not possible. That is not the purpose of our guerrilla army. But to win in an unconventional way is possible.

How seriously have major South African incursions into Angola set back the armed struggle?

Bessinger: We have often read and heard from the South African military that "SWAPO's back has been broken, the armed struggle is no more." But we talk along different lines. They use terms that are normally used in conventional warfare. This gives a wrong impression of what is going on. But we use the language of a liberation struggle. There is a lot of misunderstanding when the South Africans brief the public at large.

One demand put forward by South Africa in the current negotiations with Angola is that Angola must cut off the rear bases of PLAN. What will happen to the armed struggle if that occurs?

Bessinger: What usually happens if your rear bases are cut off is that you urbanize the guerrilla struggle. That is the logical result. But if you block all avenues, something must give way.

What is the Multi-Party Conference (MPC)?

Bessinger: The MPC is a South African creation. The people in the MPC are full-time politicians and are paid by South Africa. One cannot call them anything other than puppets. ...Unless South Africa decides that [the MPC] can make a particular decision, they have no authority.

How will the formation of an interim government affect the independence process?

Bessinger: It will aggravate the situation, but it will be a desperate act. It will bring us closer to independence because you will have a unilateral declaration of independence [by South Africa and the MPC]. I think most of the people will come out openly against such a declaration.

Describe SWAPO's ideological and political orientation.

Tjongarero: SWAPO defines itself as a national liberation movement with necessary socialist tendencies and ingredients to bring about a balanced sharing of the wealth in Namibia. Primarily, this means the ownership of the means of production. Namibian means of production is mostly in mining. Some balance also has to be found in land distribution, which is greatly unequal. There must be some form of distribution for a population denied access to land and property for so long.

What is SWAPO's position on nationalization of major industries?

Lubowski: Namibia imports about 90 percent of its foodstuffs. South Africa controls the only deep-water harbor, they control the only railway line and we get all our electricity from South Africa. So for the first few years, the South African government will basically have a SWAPO government wrapped around its finger because they will be able to control us. Even a SWAPO government will not be able to move economically unless they have good relations with South Africa. That's a fact; let's not be naive about it. We've got to have a mixed economy because we don't have a choice.

What makes you think SWAPO has the support of the majority of the people of Namibia?

Bessinger: We believe we have majority support, but there is only one way to test it—to have free and fair elections. That is just what we want.

David Goodman recently returned from southern Africa.



By Jennifer Morgan

INDIA

In January, 100,000 farmers gathered in Maharashtra to pressure the government to pay remunerative levy prices.

NEW DELHI

WITHIN INDIA TODAY MANY farmers talk of a relentless war being waged on their soil—not between Muslims and Hindus, nor between Hindus and Sikhs, but between what they perceive as two distinct and polarizing nations whose border lines do not appear on any map. It is economics that has delineated the boundary between what Sharad Joshi, leader of the Shetkari Shanghatana (Farmers Union) of Maharashtra, calls India and Bharat.

India, by Joshi's definition, is the nation that won independence from Britain 38 years ago and represents the interests of the ruling elite; *Bharat*, which in Hindi means India, is the nation composed of the impoverished masses that was subsequently colonized by India after independence. In effect, India's indigenous colonizers usurped their British colonial masters.

As Winston Churchill's prophecy—that "to lose India would reduce [England] to the scale of a minor power"—was quickly realized, so, too, was that of some analysts that the local Indian elite would gain tremendous power and wealth at the continued expense of Bharat's millions.

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister after independence and a member of the ruling elite, initiated India's rapid industrialization. Mahatma Gandhi's vision of village democracies with a labor-intensive economy was quickly tossed aside as national capital joined international capital in a head-over-heels rush to modernize the country. As a result, *swaraj*, or self-reliance, came true for India's elite who no longer had to serve their English masters. Yet for Bharat's vast and diverse millions, the fight for *swaraj* is still going on.

Where did the capital come from for India's industrialization? India received only \$35.1 billion in economic aid from 1947-80 and her foreign debt today is a relatively modest \$27 billion. Borrowing from abroad also provided some investment capital, but perhaps larger amounts were raised and continue to be collected through the systematic exploitation of mostly rural Bharat by mostly urban India.

"The government," says Sharad Joshi, "has made it a policy to industrialize at the expense of agriculture in much the same way that England favored Manchester at the expense of the Indian farmers." This treatment of the rural sector, which comprises 70 percent of the population, was institutionalized shortly after India's independence.

The Essential Commodities Act of 1955 established the compulsory purchase by the government of up to 60 percent of all food grains at levy prices set by the Agricultural Prices Commission. Produce is then sold

Two nations in one, legacy of colonialism

by the government for 20 percent to 30 percent more than levy prices. By inserting itself between the farmer and the marketplace, the government can appropriate the difference between levy and market prices.

In order to maximize this difference, levy prices are depressed as low as possible. In most cases, they are so low that the farmer cannot even recover his expenses for the season. For T.S. Ahire, a wheat farmer in Maharashtra, the average expenses for one acre per season total Rs (rupees) 2,700, while income based on the levy price is only Rs 2,000, netting him a loss of Rs 700 per acre every season.

The Maharashtra Agricultural University determined that the cost of production per ton of sugar cane is Rs 263, and yet the levy price is Rs 160 per ton, leaving the farmer to bear a Rs 103 difference. Mother nature can also prove to be a brutal adversary since the farmer can usually average at most only three good crops out of five planted.

Madhavrao K. More, one of the founding leaders of Shetkari Shanghatana, noted that wealthy farmers generally had another source of income other than agriculture. As part of a larger strategy to divide and rule the agricultural sector, key posts and highly lucrative business licenses are issued to prominent farmers. The existence of wealthy farmers, according to More, does not attest to a greater energy and business acumen on their part. Rather, it usually indicates corruption and collusion with government officials.

Most farmers survive by borrowing from the bank. It is not unusual, More said, for a farmer's loan to increase from an initial Rs 10,000 to Rs 50,000 over a five-year period due to repeated borrowing. The farmer makes a living off his loan, not his crops. A bank official for the Cooperative Bank of Maharashtra said that the average default rate is 40 percent.

For a typical loan of Rs 10,000, according to More, the farmer receives 30 percent to 70 percent of it in kind—that is, in the form of fertilizers and pesticides manufactured by foreign multinationals and local Indian companies. This forces him to use huge quantities of chemicals, rather than the less expensive natural and traditional methods of farming. Since India's banks are nationalized, the Indian government, in

effect, has organized the market—both supply and demand—for the cooperative invasion of Bharat by India and the multinational corporations.

A tremendous pent-up rage among farmers has led to rapid organization, especially since a 1980 demonstration in which two boys were killed by police. Shetkari Shanghatana now has fraternal relations with 11 other farmers' unions throughout India, despite government efforts to stop them.

During a recent conference in Dhule, which 100,000 farmers attended, state police were stationed throughout Maharashtra in order to enforce a law prohibiting the use of farm vehicles for transportation. One farmer was ticketed Rs 500 for violating this selectively enforced law. When the ruling Congress (I) Party holds its conferences, however, not only is this law not enforced, but farmers are allowed to ride the trains and buses for free. Had farmers been allowed to use their vehicles, it is estimated that more than 300,000 would have attended the Dhule conference.

The union's efforts have yielded higher levy prices in some areas, yet these gains are hard to sustain. In 1980 farmers withheld their produce and the levy price rose from Rs 110 to Rs 300 per quintal, but now, when inflation has further decreased the value of money, the price is back to Rs 110.

As the government's stranglehold on agriculture tightens, farmers and landless laborers are flooding into India's already overpopulated cities in staggering numbers. The urban population has more than doubled in the past 20 years. Half of this increase could be due to rural-urban migration, according to a population expert writing in the *Times of India*.

As many as 100 million unemployed now compete for the ever-shrinking employment crumbs, according to some estimates. These poor are easy prey for unscrupulous

India's ruling elite have replaced their old British counterparts.

contractors ready to pay the lowest possible wage for labor. This economic environment also fosters the use of bonded labor. For a small loan granted by an employer, the borrower pledges to pay back the sum with his own labor over an unspecified period of time. But instead of the debt decreasing, it increases due to exorbitant interest rates (sometimes as high as 200 percent) and because the debtor must continue to borrow to take care of basic human needs.

Bhoma Ram and his Hindu family were first bonded in 1947 when they fled Muslim Pakistan during the partition, when East and West Pakistan were formed. Losing all family possessions, he borrowed Rs 300 (\$25) and became bonded for 38 years until his recent release in February 1985. "My lifetime spans British rule and Independence. I see no difference between them," he said.

Although the Indian Supreme Court passed the Abolition of Bonded Labour Act in 1976, the number of bonded laborers has actually increased. Surveys conducted by the Gandhi Peace Foundation and the National Labour Institute show that the estimated number of bonded laborers in the country increased from 22 million in 1976 to 28 million in 1978, i.e., after the legislative abolition of the system.

Swami Agnivesh, chairman of the Bandhua Mukti Morcha (Bonded Liberation Front), says, "We have an excellent facade of democracy, of planned development, of human rights and a lot more, but nothing has changed at the ground level where the specter of slavery and starvation is writ large on the face of a mass of humanity."

The Bonded Liberation Front has succeeded in releasing 9,000-10,000 bonded laborers. But the only way to stop further victimization is to give the rural sector top economic priority, Agnivesh claims, through just levy prices and investment in agro-based, as well as cottage industries. "We deplore very much the conspicuous absence of political and administrative will to stem the rot of the Bonded Labour System through socio-economic structural changes."

Thus India's so-called socialist planned development has, in reality, led to a horrifying distortion of the economy. State capitalism, many analysts contend, would more appropriately describe a system that provides the ruling elite with a golden pipeline for capital accumulation. Institutionalized robbing of Bharat by India is leading to an increasingly lopsided economy. This, in turn, leads to higher unemployment, more bondage and increased human rights violations. Untold misery, violence and loss of life are sure to increase in the unrelenting, yet undeclared, civil war between India and Bharat.

AMSTERDAM

A SURPRISING NOTE OF PESSIMISM was struck at the outset of the fourth annual European Nuclear Disarmament (END) convention by its host, Dutch Interchurch Council (IKV) Secretary General Mient Jan Faber. Although the Dutch government is officially to decide on deployment of cruise nuclear missiles in Holland only next November, Faber clearly considered the anti-missile struggle over and lost. "We not only live in a post-deployment period," he told about a thousand delegates from Western peace movements in his welcoming speech, "but many commentators also like to label the present time as a *post-peace movement* period." Faber did not deny such an interpretation, and in a press conference at the end of the convention suggested the need for a "strong peace organization" that could, presumably, supersede the movement and provide a more coherent program and policy.

The peace movement had failed, Faber said in his opening speech. The superpowers had succeeded in disciplining their respective allies on the Euromissile issue. "There exists no perspective, no outlook, no hope, as far as we can see."

Times seem to have changed drastically from the days when peace movement leaders tried to push reluctant Social Democrats to oppose Pershing and cruise missiles. At Amsterdam, it was the Social Democratic politicians present, Dutch and West German, who objected to Faber's "demobilizing" speech and tried to pump some optimism back into the anti-missile struggle. Dutch Labor Party leader Joop den Uyl exhorted Faber, "Don't give up! Persevere!"

While judging END a failure in combatting the arms race, Faber claimed success in its other line of work: establishing a dialog with oppositional or "independent" groups in Eastern Europe. The practice of "detente from below," he said, had "overcome a situation where Europe was so deeply divided that dissident or critical voices in the West and critical-dissident voices in the East could not reach one another because they tended to comply with the maxim that 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend.'" The Western peace movement and Eastern dissidents "have found each other, especially in the last year," he said. "This achievement is one of the most fundamental and the most encouraging ever made by the peace movement."

This achievement is hard for most grassroots peace activists to evaluate, despite the films, articles and tapes presented to the convention from Eastern European groups not allowed to attend.

Nor would everyone agree that the peace movement has totally failed as a peace movement. Dan Smith of British END argued that the NATO missile deployment was a political failure because it had broken rather than strengthened the Western European consensus.

Many people observed that after the Euromissiles, there was no issue able to unite and mobilize the peace movement. Everyone is against Star Wars, of course—even, to a large extent, the same European governments that defended the missiles. The real political issue in Europe is a French counter-proposal, EUREKA. Some groups represented at Amsterdam, such as the German Greens, strongly oppose EUREKA as a major step toward militarization of Europe, while others (notably the French and Italians) have adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Jos van Kemenade of Dutch Pax Christi saw EUREKA "positively" as an opportunity for Europe to approach technological development "in a more peaceful way."

The six-month moratorium on Soviet SS-20 missile deployment announced last April by Gorbachov was virtually ignored as too little and too late. There was no sign of any intention by the peace movement to use it either to oppose further NATO deployments (notably in Holland) or to press the Soviets to clarify their own deployment

Approach to East splits peace movement



Petra Kelly and Mient Jan Faber at END conference in Amsterdam.

figures. Dutch officials have promised to approve deployment of U.S. cruise missiles if Soviet SS-20s exceed 378. American officials have recently put the number of SS-20s at 414 and then 423 and NATO commander Gen. Bernard Rogers has said the figure is based on counting SS-20 bases, not individual launchers, and is thus unlikely to drop. END appeared to have lost all interest in such technicalities.

Detente, above and below.

Only Social Democratic politicians insisted that if and when they come to office in Holland or West Germany, the missiles can be removed.

"We need support for the upcoming battle over the missiles. That battle is not yet lost in this country," Den Uyl said.

However, Faber seemed less concerned with Social Democrats who were present than with the Christian Democrats who had ignored an invitation to attend the convention. Faber several times lamented the absence of the Christian Democrats as a sign of the peace movement's failure. The Christian Democrats are the leading party in the Dutch government. This is not an eternal arrangement. But Faber heads, after all, a church organization that can perceive the Christian Democrats as the natural target of its campaign to influence policy. And beyond that, hostility toward Social Democratic detente policy emerged in Amsterdam as perhaps the most politically significant characteristic of the END leadership approach.

German Social Democratic Party (SPD) Bundestag member Gert Weisskirchen told of a "sign of hope" from Germany: a draft treaty to ban chemical weapons from both German states recently worked out by the SPD and the ruling party of East Germany. The draft includes comprehensive verification measures for banning the superpowers' chemical weapons from the two Germanies. Such a treaty would set a precedent. It could serve as a model for a nuclear free zone in Central Europe and beyond.

If the SPD returns to the Bonn government, this treaty could become a reality—if there is enough pressure from the peace movement to counter the inevitable pressure on the SPD from other quarters against it. Those in END who give priority to dialog with the East showed little interest in such a treaty and, indeed, seemed hostile to it as an example of "detente from above" which can strengthen existing governments

and systems, as opposed to "detente from below," intended to undermine both and lead to a new sort of nonaligned Europe.

"Peace is so important that we must use all forms of cooperation," Weisskirchen pleaded. "Detente from below and detente from above are not contradictory." He pointed to the draft chemical weapons ban

IN THESE TIMES, JULY 24-AUG. 6, 1985 9
as "a success of practical detente policy that transforms pressure from below into a constructive step."

The Germans were underrepresented at Amsterdam, underscoring the disagreements between END and major sectors of the West German peace movement over dialog with Eastern Europe. Germans are particularly wary of any criticisms of Eastern regimes that can dovetail with traditional German nationalist or imperialist claims. Besides that, both the SPD and the Protestant churches are engaged in fruitful dialog with powerful counterparts in East Germany and are not willing to sacrifice these contacts for contacts with a handful of dissidents unable to influence policy.

The concept of "technical fix," developed by Mary Kaldor and other END leaders to describe Star Wars, is also used by some of them to stigmatize Social Democratic projects for arms control.

Confusion in the East.

The alternative is unclear—especially if it is left to East European dissidents to define it. The documents from the East at the END convention showed just how difficult it is to work out a common East-West "critical-dissident" point of view. In the case of Poland, at least, it seems impossible.

Particularly interesting was the long interview with Jacek Kuron conducted in Poland last April by Mient Jan Faber and Wolfgang Müller of IKV. Kuron told them that END's contact group in Poland, KOS (Committee for Social Resistance), "found its circulation dramatically declining" after it tried to bring the peace discussion into the Polish underground press. This is because among Polish activists, "the common opinion is that Reagan's policies are the most favorable for Poland."

There is a notable convergence between Kuron's own analysis and Reagan's famous ambition to use the arms race to spend the Soviet system to death. Kuron sees no place for a Western-style peace movement in Poland. On the other hand, he says, a move-

Continued on following page

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Marcos

Continued from page 3

are permanently based here. Most are Navy or Air Force personnel at Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Field. Another 9,000 sailors, airmen and officers may be in the country at any given time as ships and air squadrons visit the bases. Annual war games involving U.S. and Philippine ground, air and sea troops are held.

Subic and Clark are staging bases for U.S. military operations in the southeast Asian and Indian Ocean regions. Subic Bay is the main supply base for the Seventh Fleet. Clark Air Force Base is the 13th Air Force Headquarters, communications and logistics hub for southeast Asia and host unit of the 405th Fighter Wing. It is the busiest U.S. air base outside the U.S. Other major installations include the San Miguel Naval Communications Station, the largest such outpost off the U.S. mainland, Wal-

lace Air Station and Camp John Hay, a recreational center in the highlands of northern Luzon.

Under the 1983-1991 base rental agreement, the U.S. is to pay the Philippines \$900 million in various forms of aid. Of this, \$425 million was originally earmarked for military uses and \$475 million as general economic support, but Congress has been cutting the military portion in its annual budgets.

To some, the most dangerous Americans present are members of two Special Operations Forces units. The U.S. embassy confirms that such troops have been based at Clark and Subic since 1978.

"They could very well be the cutting edge of major U.S. intervention in the future," says University of the Philippines professor Roland Simbulan. He calls these units "anti-insurgency experts." He warns that they are used for "dirty work" during social upheavals in the Third World.

James B. Goodno writes regularly for *In These Times* from the Philippines.

END

Continued from page 9

ment like *Solidarnosc* that brings pressure for a higher standard of living amounts to a peace movement because it limits Soviet bloc military spending. Kuron said the question is "how far the Soviet peoples will go in accepting a lower standard of living." He thought "we have a chance" because "the Soviet Union will not be able to carry on with the arms race."

Then what? Kuron wants to propose as an alternative to the arms race (once the USSR can't take it any more) a "neutralization and demilitarization of Central Europe," comprising Poland, the two Germanies, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The neutralized zone would be "under the control of the two superpowers," an arrangement that, he acknowledges, "could potentially, in part, strengthen the position of the Americans in Europe."

The Polish desire to be dependent on the U.S. cannot very easily be reconciled with the West European desire to decrease dependence on the U.S. (and superpowers in general).

Apparently frustrated in its search for a credible counterpart in Poland ready to endorse an approach acceptable to most of the Western peace movement, END has turned toward Czechoslovakia and Hungary. In particular, the French committee for nuclear disarmament (CODENE) has pursued talks with Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia. This produced the Prague Appeal of last March 11, signed by prominent intellectuals including former Foreign Minister Jiri Hajek. Its proposals, centering on efforts to deepen and enforce the Helsinki agreements, are in line with Charter 77's original purpose and with Western detente policy.

END's dialog with the East has thus served to point up differences not only between Eastern and Western, but also between Eastern dissidents. And these differ-

ences come back to point up and accentuate divergences within the Western peace movement. The prudent Hungarians and skeptical Czechs are much closer to Social Democratic detente policy than are the Poles, who see popular pressure joining with Reagan's arms spending pressure to weaken Soviet power.

The appealingly democratic ideal of "detente from below" suggests a convergence of grassroots movements in Eastern and Western Europe, coming together to create a peaceful, constructive Europe without the faults of American capitalism or Soviet Communism.

At present, this spontaneous convergence is not occurring, despite END efforts. For the moment, grassroots movements are being kept under control (in the East) or are in a slump (in the West, with some exceptions like Spain). As grassroots movements recede, what is emerging is a rivalry over strategy toward change in Eastern Europe between two major organized forces: Social Democracy and the Catholic Church. On the one hand there is the secular reformism of SPD *Ostpolitik*. On the other, there is Pope Wojtyla's ambition to restore Christendom. The SPD approach, supported by German Protestantism, aims at a certain institutional convergence between East and West. The Vatican project would maintain and channel popular hostility toward Soviet bloc official authority, strengthening the traditional ecclesiastic counter power.

It may be significant for the future that the high points of real enthusiasm were stirred not by perplexing East-West puzzles but by calls for solidarity with Third World liberation struggles. Gabriela Sera was warmly applauded for relating the thriving Spanish peace movement to Central America. And the only standing ovation of the convention went to Xavier Gorostiaga from Nicaragua, who spoke of the Christian "option for the poor" as providing a "new model for change" in Central America that has nothing to do with the East-West conflict.

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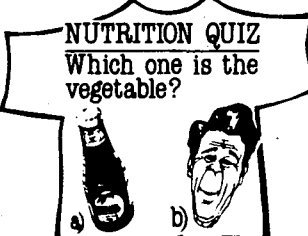
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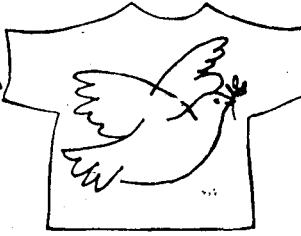
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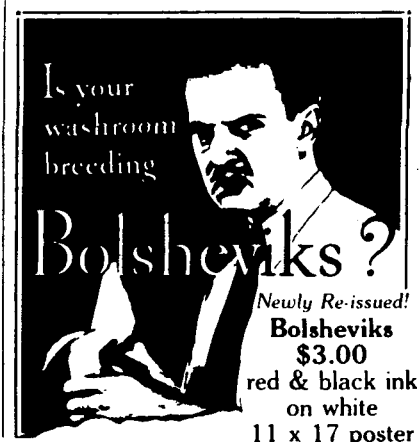


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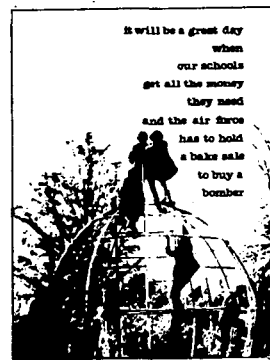


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Guerrillas still strong in Usulután

By Chris Norton

EL MARILLO, USULUTAN, EL SALVADOR

IN 1983 USULUTAN, A RICH AGRICULTURAL province in eastern El Salvador, was targeted, along with San Vicente, for the U.S.-promoted National Plan. The aim was to clear the province of guerrillas and then go in with government services to win the hearts and minds of the people.

"The success of the National Plan will ultimately determine the outcome of the war," said Col. Joseph Stringham as he left his post as head of the U.S. advisers a year ago.

But now, two years after the province was targeted, FMLN guerrillas are still active through most of Usulután and are the de facto government in many areas.

Col. Mauricio Vargas, commander of the government's U.S.-trained Atonal Battalion, points out the major guerrilla "zones of persistence" on a large relief map—they cover most of it.

Guerrillas operate in the mosquito-infested coastal salt marshes, in the rugged coastal highlands near Jucuarán, in the rolling lowlands along the Lempa River, and in the eastern part of the province—in fact, throughout the entire department with the exception of the sweltering capital, the main highways that the army patrols and a small zone of coffee production on the volcanic highlands in the center of the province.

Even that area isn't secure. Col. Vargas and the Atonal Battalion spent the entire Christmas harvest season stationed in the cool, mountain-top coffee town of Berlin guarding the harvest in the surrounding plantations.

"Sadly, we are a battlefield," laments the Departmental Governor Luiz Angel Lazo, in the government-controlled capital. "We only have an average of three days of electricity a week because of the guerrilla sabotage. Sabotaging the economy is part of the guerrillas' strategy."

Usulután formerly grew more cotton than any other department but now much of the rich bottom land is idle or in other crops, since guerrillas warned growers not to plant cotton—the country's number-two export crop. Production of the crop, which guerrillas charge helps finance the war, is down 40 percent.

Coffee production hasn't been as affected, but probably only because most coffee plantations are paying sizable "war taxes" to the guerrillas to ensure that their crops are left alone, a fact that neither the army nor the landowners like to talk about.

A military expert familiar with the Salvadoran army admits that in Usulután "the track record is not as good as other areas." He says the guerrillas have a very well established infrastructure that is difficult to root out and that many guerrillas work during the day and fight by night. "It's very hard to catch them."

Col. Vargas concedes that despite the army's increased mobility, "it's still difficult to control the terrorists, but they can't develop large operations as they did before."

Hearts and minds.

Vargas, within the Salvadoran army, has one of the more sophisticated understandings of the importance of psychological warfare, having studied it for two years in nationalist China and then taught it at the U.S.-run School of the Americas in Panama.

He recognizes the need for social reforms as a bulwark against the guerrillas and copies some of the tactics that have built rebel support in the countryside.

The rebels, for example, had launched a campaign to raise the pay scale for coffee

pickers, so Vargas started his own crusade to force growers to comply, not with the guerrilla demands, which he terms extreme, but with the legal minimum wage.

He printed up leaflets telling pickers to notify his barracks about any grower paying below the minimum wage. Vargas says that 15 or 20 growers were reported and called to tell them to pay the legal rate.

Yet while Vargas seeks to win hearts and minds his troops have been brutal with civilians they suspect of guerrilla sympathies.

During an April sweep through a small village called El Marillo, which borders on the salt marshes near where the Lempa River empties into the Pacific, the Atonal Battalion removed 40 villagers from their houses. Four men were tortured during interrogation and two women were gang-raped by 20 soldiers.

The next day the villagers were flown

executed her on her next trip down in the zone.

"Ernesto," a high-level guerrilla leader based in the coastal swamps, claims that the more frequent army operations have failed to hit the guerrillas and instead are increasingly targeting the civilian population.

Ernesto said that the army's new tactic of enforcing the minimum daily wage was "demagogic," dismissing the legal rate as a "starvation wage." He said the army's tactics would fail in the long run because they failed to address the chief problem of the poor landless coast dwellers—"that all the land is still in the hands of a few landlords."

Still other guerrillas admitted that recruitment is more difficult now that a quick victory is not in the offing. It isn't clear how many young men "incorporated" in 1982 and '83 when triumph seemed near



by helicopter to the Six Brigade army base in Usulután and posed in front of a bunch of arms for journalists. Most were held a week and threatened not to return to their homes.

Two men, one a local leader of a church-related development agency and the other a 56-year-old man who by virtue of his sixth-grade education had become the unpaid schoolteacher in El Marillo, were both sent to the Mariona prison as political prisoners after signing confessions while blindfolded.

Since that time the army has formed a civil defense unit in the nearest town on the coast highway, San Marcos Lempa. The civil defense, who think that 75 percent of the El Marillo inhabitants are guerrilla sympathizers, have been limiting the amount of food the women can bring back in.

The women also said that the civil defense threatened the man who drove his truck down the muddy track to El Marillo. Now they have to walk for three hours in each direction.

Another reason things are tense is that the guerrillas executed a woman member of the civil defense committee. She was a shrimp buyer and the guerrillas believed she was acting as a spy for the army. After sending her a letter warning her to stop collaborating with the army the guerrillas

will weather the change to a prolonged war of attrition. The government claims that large numbers of guerrillas are deserting, but in their figures they count civilian guerrilla sympathizers who are forcibly removed from their homes by the army. The actual number of combatants deserting still appears to be low.

Stopping mayors.

In eastern El Salvador, the dominant guerrilla organization, the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), has launched a campaign to prevent the mayors elected in the government's March 31 elections from taking office. They have killed one mayor and abducted another 17. Now almost all the mayors in the eastern part of the country live in the provincial capitals and the government's presence has been effectively blocked.

Radio Venceremos justified the abductions of the mayors saying that they were an integral part of the government's counterinsurgency program. Col. Amaya, who heads the National Committee for Reconstruction of Areas (CONARA), which does development work with a counterinsurgency slant that many believe has close ties to the CIA, acknowledged that the kidnapping of the mayors was a blow to the program.

Although some have criticized the guerrillas' tactics, the reaction of many local

IN THESE TIMES JULY 24-AUG. 6, 1985, 11 residents was matter-of-fact, concluding that the mayors had been foolish to try to assume office in the face of the opposition of the de facto government—the guerrillas.

In San Jorge, the only town where a mayor was killed, the ERP sent the mayor-elect two letters telling him not to take office, visited his house and briefly abducted him, according to local residents. When he went ahead and took office in spite of the warning, he was shot.

"The ERP is attempting to have an effect on the local level and they have achieved it," says one academic analyst. "Almost all the mayors have been forced to move to the departmental capitals and they're show-

The regime seeks to win hearts and minds, but troops have been brutal with civilians they suspect of guerrilla sympathies.

ing that the army doesn't have control there. Although it doesn't play well internationally, locally the people understand it."

Civilian feelings about the guerrillas seem to vary greatly from area to area but development, medical and church sources with wide contacts in the countryside report that sympathy for, or at least toleration of, the guerrillas remains greater than often assumed.

Relief workers report stories of villagers working closely with the guerrillas, turning in army *orejas*—ears. In at least one case the guerrillas held a town meeting to try a person accused of being an informer. The townspeople voted to execute the informer.

The government and the army, with their history of heavy-handed repression, aren't likely to have an easy time gaining public support despite their new emphasis on psychological operations.

A sign of the army's problem: a stack of army propaganda leaflets tossed by army airplanes has been carefully collected and strung up on the wall of a peasant house in rural Usulután.

The ever-practical but illiterate peasants use the leaflets—telling them to "denounce the terrorists"—for toilet paper, something that they are too poor to afford otherwise.

Chris Norton is *In These Times'* correspondent in El Salvador.

This is the third article in a series on the Rust Belt by David Moberg. The series has been made possible by a grant from the Joseph Aidlin Foundation.

By David Moberg

AUSTIN, MN
T THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, when Upton Sinclair shocked the nation with his muckraking novel, he characterized the meatpacking industry as "the jungle." With dangerous, tyrannical workplaces chewing up its workers and spitting out often unhealthy products, the business of producing red meat was dominated by monopolistic "big four" packers. Those days are largely gone, although preparing meat is still hard, demanding and injurious work—the third most dangerous industry in the U.S.—in recent years meatpacking has become a jungle of another sort. It is now a bloody economic battleground in which the biggest losers have been workers—who had for decades fought through their union to win decent pay for their labors—and small communities throughout the Midwest that faced hard times as packinghouses on which they relied suddenly shut down.

In many other troubled Midwestern industries, international competition, a strong dollar, or flight of factories overseas has played a major role. But the turmoil in slaughtering and processing cattle and hogs is almost entirely domestic. It has been a full-scale assault on the workers and their union aided by new technologies and above all by some new—as well as tried and true—union-bashing strategies. Steelworkers may suffer from an international surplus of steelmaking capacity; the men and women in the packinghouses suffer from a purely domestic glut of capacity in an industry with little room for growth.

The seeds of this turmoil were planted more than 20 years ago, but it has developed with great intensity recently. The consequences have been dramatic: radical cuts in workers' pay, benefits and working conditions; the decline of several large, historic companies; a churning of plant closings and openings within a few Midwestern states where the industry is centered; the rise of dangerous levels of concentration as the ruthless new operators won out, with farmers and, at times, consumers paying a price that may grow in years to come.

This year nearly one-third of the 100,000 packinghouse union members—now a division of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)—will negotiate new contracts. But one local contractual battle involving only 1,500 workers at the home plant of Geo. A. Hormel & Company in Austin, Minn., not only stands out but also

may affect the outcome of other negotiations.

P-9's corporate campaign.

In this quiet, attractive and comfortable town of 26,000 in southern Minnesota, UFCW Local P-9 has launched an all-out "corporate campaign" that may include its first strike in over 50 years to defend its contract and reject the erosion of wages and benefits that has spread throughout the industry. That decision has led to division within the union itself, as the international union leadership has fought the local's strategy, advocating instead a policy of "retrenchment" to prevailing lower wages followed by an attempt to raise all workers' wages more uniformly. Now, in other locals of the UFCW and in the labor movement as a whole, top officials are fighting behind the scenes against growing rank-and-file support for the Austin workers whose corporate campaign is being organized by Ray Rogers, a veteran of the fight for union recognition against the notorious textile giant, J.P. Stevens.

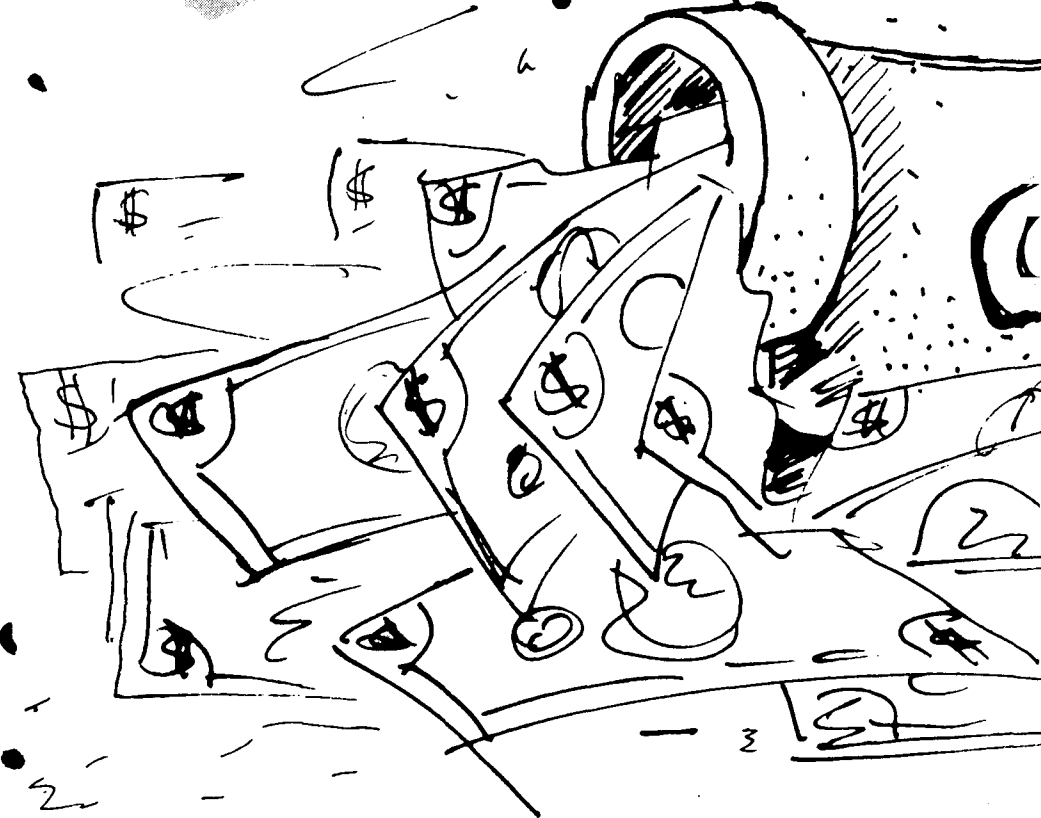
The upper-level antagonism is ironic, since just last February the AFL-CIO executive council announced that revitalization of the labor movement required more use of such tactics—designed to break up the political and financial support network of the target company and thereby increase workers' power. But the battle in Austin is replete with ironies. Officially the UFCW

packinghouse division argues adamantly that contract concessions do not save jobs and has often prodded other locals—with mixed results—to stand up to company takeaways. Yet in Austin there is a militant local with overwhelming membership support and involvement defending precisely that position without support from its international.

The meatpacking industry, the fourth largest manufacturing industry in the country in sales, has undergone several transformations. After shifting from the northeast in the latter half of the 19th century to a few major Midwest railroad centers, such as Carl Sandburg's "Hog Butcher for the world" Chicago, with its now-vanished giant stockyards and slaughterhouses, the

Return of

The Jungle



Workers pay for plant failure

"God Bless the Unemployed," reads the sign at Palmer House Food Processing Technology ("friend of the meat processor"). That should keep Him—or Her—busy around here. With an official unemployment rate of more than 14 percent, the 163,000-population Cedar Falls-Waterloo area ranks fifth in the metropolitan unemployment sweepstakes. Unlike Austin, it shows hardship—vacant stores and a lifeless downtown area, despite recent efforts to refurbish public buildings and grounds. It has suffered from the depressed Iowa farm economy around it, first from long-term, massive layoffs at the area's largest factory, John Deere's tractor works. Then from the shutdown of the second largest factory in town and a fixture since 1891, Rath Packing Company, at the end of last year. New plans and wild rumors have kept up hopes of Rath reopening, but now all seem doomed.

Rath's closing was not simply the end of another old meatpacking plant, the victim of a cutthroat industry with too much productive capacity. It was also the end

of a worker ownership experiment that had been hailed at its inception in 1980 as one of the more democratic employee stock ownership plans (ESOP). Now the vultures of interpretation swirl above Rath's carcass as its workers scatter to new towns or accept enforced early retirement.

From the beginning the UFCW had been skeptical, especially since the worker ownership plan involved a cut in wages—actually a wage deferral and a diversion into stock payments that would have been repaid had the plan succeeded. Critics now argue that Rath shows how worker buy-outs of failing firms are doomed. Yet the picture is not so clear.

Once the largest and most modern packing plant in the world, Rath suffered for many years from unimaginative managers who failed to modernize and reinvest, a familiar tale in rustbelt industries. The company treated workers with indifference or contempt. As a result, labor relations were so adversarial that the national guard had to be called out after a striker was killed in the late '40s. Beef and sheep

killing ended in the '50s, and by the early '70s management's failure to invest and high interest costs led to the first of a long string of unprofitable years, despite help from a federally guaranteed loan.

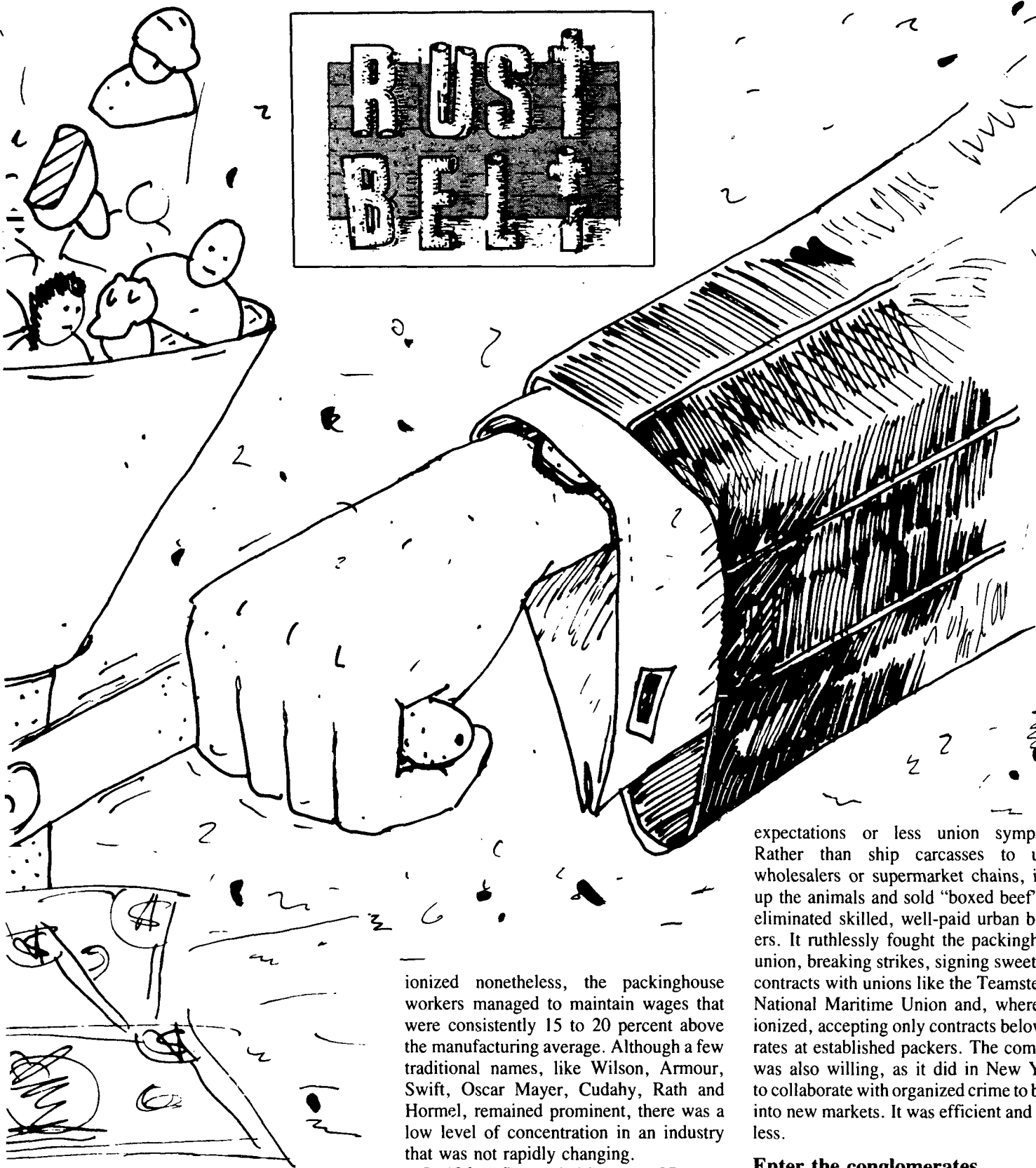
Rather than accept company demands for concession or bankruptcy, union leaders—Lyle Taylor and Chuck Mueller—proposed buying the plant. But they also guaranteed that workers controlled the trust that held their stock with each person having one vote. Workers appointed a majority of the board of directors, but only a few workers themselves served on the board—a key error in the hindsight of several local union defenders of employee ownership. Financing came from workers' deferred wages, federal assistance administered through the city and county, and a commercial bank line of credit.

After a blip of good fortune on paper, the red ink began to accumulate again despite significant productivity increases after the buyout in June 1980. Workers through Action Research Teams came up with hundreds of ideas, many of which were instituted. According to research by Provo University professor Warner Woodworth, an adviser to Rath, productivity increased an average of 14 percent between summer of 1981 and the winter of 1981-82. His survey of worker attitudes

showed satisfaction and other key indicators increased at least somewhat for roughly two-thirds of workers.

The road to failure.

Why didn't employee ownership succeed? Some would say it was impossible with such an old plant in such a competitive environment. But workers as well as some consultants who advised Rath and followed it in detail—such as Chris Meek of Provo University and Joseph Blasi of Harvard—blame management. "The truth is the complete opposite" of those claims that the plant failed because it was worker owned, Blasi said. "If I were to characterize it briefly, workers and management on the shop floor were making great progress in productivity, but profits were being pissed away at the top as a result of poor planning, marketing problems and very bad fiscal controls." With better long-term financial planning, Blasi said, "there's a very good chance Rath could have succeeded." Meek agreed in an interview with the *Waterloo Courier*: "I'm confident they could have made it if they had proper management. It would have been a struggle, but it could have been done." Given its bad shape when workers took over concessions were necessary, but with employee ownership workers at least had a



industry began another move in the '50s. Increasingly more compact packinghouses were located in small towns throughout the Midwest, where packers were closer to supplies of hogs and cattle. They could also draw on farmers forced off the land as New Deal farm programs were trimmed, generating a presumably more docile labor force than big city workers exposed to union traditions. Overwhelmingly un-

ionized nonetheless, the packinghouse workers managed to maintain wages that were consistently 15 to 20 percent above the manufacturing average. Although a few traditional names, like Wilson, Armour, Swift, Oscar Mayer, Cudahy, Rath and Hormel, remained prominent, there was a low level of concentration in an industry that was not rapidly changing.

In 1961 a firm called Iowa Beef Processors, now IBP, a division of Occidental Petroleum, began to change all that. Iowa Beef drastically cut costs of production by building much larger, single-story plants providing new economies of scale. It located single-species slaughterhouses (instead of traditional plants that might kill cattle, calves, hogs and sheep) even closer to cattle suppliers. By breaking down traditionally skilled work into less skilled jobs, it drew on a broader labor pool with lower

expectations or less union sympathy. Rather than ship carcasses to urban wholesalers or supermarket chains, it cut up the animals and sold "boxed beef" that eliminated skilled, well-paid urban butchers. It ruthlessly fought the packinghouse union, breaking strikes, signing sweetheart contracts with unions like the Teamsters or National Maritime Union and, where unionized, accepting only contracts below the rates at established packers. The company was also willing, as it did in New York, to collaborate with organized crime to break into new markets. It was efficient and ruthless.

Enter the conglomerates.

Packers work on small margins but with huge volume. An American Meat Institute economist said that profit of 1 percent of sales represented a "good average." Saving just a small amount on labor or other costs and reducing waste, as IBP did, could make profits soar and give the company a competitive edge in pricing. A few other companies tried to follow its pattern and grew at the expense not only of many small packers but also of old giants. From 1969 to

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1982 the number of firms slaughtering steers and heifers dropped by half from 926 to 471, with a similar decline in the number of plants. In the '80s the pace of decline has nearly doubled. As a result the market share of the four largest firms, now Iowa Beef, Excel (owned by Cargill, the huge, privately held international grain trader), Swift Independent and Monfort, rose from 30 percent in 1972 to 45 percent in 1982. In some areas, the concentration of buyers is even greater: the top four companies in Iowa, which has rapidly slipped from the top-ranked to the sixth-ranked cattle producer, controlled 85 percent of the market in 1982.

Iowa Beef's success inspired several conglomerates to buy out meatpackers. They apparently figured that in such a high-volume industry cost-cutting measures could boost return on investment dramatically. Also, there were large cash flows that could be used to finance other acquisitions—"milking the cash cow." In addition to Occidental's purchase of IBP, Esmark bought Swift, Greyhound bought Armour, LTV bought Wilson, United Brands bought Wilson, General Host bought Cudahy and Hanson Trust bought Hygrade. Cargill, the giant international grain trader (if it were not privately held, it would rank in the top 15 of the Fortune 500), most dramatically represented a new trend to vertical integration that had been fought in a 1920 consent decree regulating the industry. Cargill is a major seed firm, owns the nation's largest commercial livestock feeding operation, owns one of the biggest livestock feed manufacturers, speculates heavily in the commodity futures market and owns Excel, an IBP clone that has now moved to the number-two spot in the beef industry and has begun experimenting with branded fresh beef, a move experts see as offering the potential for greater non-competitive profitmaking.

In many cases the conglomerate purchases were ruinous and not only weakened established firms but added momentum to the anti-union animus. As a UFCW report summarized, "Conglomerates used meatpacking subsidiaries as cash cows by demanding enormous cash dividends, unreasonable management fees, and high interest on loans given to packing operations.... Between 1970 and 1980, conglomerates made huge profits by selling off assets of packing subsidiaries.... Conglomerates even made money by closing plants in that tax laws allow companies to write off plant closing costs against earnings.... At a time when the industry was changing quickly and substantial capital investment was desperately needed, the conglomerates were draining packing operations of their capital. Within a decade and a half, the

Continued on following page

chance of recouping that investment.

The "death blow" to Rath came in 1982 when its main lender, Security Pacific Bank, reduced its line of credit precisely at a time when a consultant of its own choosing—the brokerage firm of Price, Waterhouse and Company—recommended increasing credit to take advantage of a profitable market. Several people involved with Rath suspect—partly on the basis of circumstantial evidence, partly because of a passing remark by a Security Pacific representative—that the bank was squeezing Rath in order to force it into a sale to Iowa Beef (IBP), which had been planning a major entry into pork processing for several years. Rath rejected an IBP bid, but last winter agreed to sell its relatively new plant at Columbus Junction, Iowa, to IBP. A leading banker from Columbus Junction has said that IBP may increase the capacity of that plant from 3,000 hogs a day to 11,000, adding to the pressures in the industry.

Yet even if there was no collusion in undermining Rath—a step that does not seem out of the question given the history of IBP's rapaciousness—the financial pressures at Rath and the impediments of an entrenched, unresponsive management were undermining the experiment in worker ownership. "When we were first

worker-owned there was a new enthusiasm," machine repairman Jim Wells said. "But it wasn't too long before we got the feeling management really didn't want our input. If you complained to the foreman, he'd say something derisive, like, 'You're a stockholder. Why don't you do something about it?'" Workers found out that ideas they were promoting, such as taking a lead in selling vacuum-packed fresh pork, were never pushed and even sabotaged in upper management. "It was not democratic," millwright Marty Johnson said. "We had no input whatsoever, even though we owned 60 percent of the stock. They went on the same old way, barging ahead with blinders on."

Workers pay.

Management came back for even more wage deferrals in February 1983—an additional \$2.40 an hour, pushing wages to \$7.24, much to the dismay of the UFCW. Later that year, with former union President Taylor acting as president of the company, Rath declared bankruptcy, voided the union contract and instituted its own set of policies. Distrust and bitterness had replaced the earlier cooperation, but many workers still had a great passion to make their company work.

As Taylor was trying to raise money

for a stripped-down Rath, a group of workers late last year offered their own alternative. The Employee Reorganization Committee (ERC) insisted on replacing Taylor (preferably with a former Rath executive who had quit many years earlier in frustration with its stodgy board), making the new company 100 percent employee-owned, and instituting a new labor agreement. They raised pledges of \$4.5 million in investments from 787 employees, which they hoped would secure a \$30 million line of credit. But a Texas investment group that they had counted on fell through, and they discovered too late that one of the new socially conscious investment firms might have been interested. It was not the only story of hopes victimized. Every few weeks some new businessman would announce that he was ready to save Rath, and many came into town, collected large fees for making studies and then split, never to be found again. By May 1 the bankruptcy judge—recently pulled from the case because of stress from the overload of farm and business bankruptcies in the area—ruled that the trademark, the Black Hawk Indian symbol held as collateral by Security Pacific, had to be sold. That sealed the plant's fate, even though Taylor continues to propose schemes.

Mueller, like many other union members, thinks that the crucial mistake was not getting more control immediately by strong union members. Blasi concludes that in worker buy-outs of failing firms—less than 5 percent of all instances of worker ownership—an immediate, critical analysis of management is essential. Workers should get the best professional financial advice possible, he said, and "workers should completely control the board of directors and only put public figures on the board who directly respond to their interests." Labor participation can only succeed "if it reaches up from the shop floor into financial planning."

Facing an extremely difficult task, workers at Rath did remarkably well, but they were let down in both conventional and worker ownership by incompetent managers who failed to see them as the strength of the firm. Now many are not only financially strapped but sad and mad. "We hate to see that plant disappear," Wells said as he sat with fellow ERC advocates Johnson and Ed Herold in the spartan office that is still a place for old Rath employees to gather. "It's a love-hate relationship. I've got 34 years in. When I think of that Black Hawk label gone, that plant deteriorating and jobs gone, it brings me about as close to tears as anything."

Continued from preceding page
conglomerates had effectively destroyed once soundly run companies."

Starting in the '80s, the conglomerates—whose managers rarely understand the industry—reversed course and began selling off all or parts of their operations, often closing more plants in the process. Two were especially critical. LTV sold Wilson Foods, leaving it in weakened condition and setting the stage for Wilson's dramatic 1983 filing for bankruptcy and unilateral reduction of wages from \$10.60 an hour to \$6.50. In 1983 Greyhound also demanded concessions, which the union rejected, then shut down its Armour plants and sold them to the ConAgra conglomerate, which promptly reopened them as non-union plants with a new workforce at \$6 an hour.

Although the assault on workers' wages had started in the beef industry, by the '80s it was spreading into pork. IBP had announced it wanted to enter the pork business, but existing companies were already scrambling to cut costs even without that scare. As beef consumption declined in the late '70s from a peak in 1976, pork gained. But then pork dropped back down again starting in 1981 as all red meats have suffered from price competition from low-cost poultry, general economic recession and, to a lesser extent, from new dietary worries about fat. With flat markets, the competition is keen. But more than 60 percent of pork is sold in a processed form—hams, bacon, sausage, lunch meats—whereas 70 percent of beef is sold fresh. The importance of brand names, which permit higher profits and non-price competition, and processing suggest that the pork industry could divide between a dog-eat-dog "kill and cut" portion of the industry and more lucrative processors, who would do little of their own slaughtering.

During the '80s the shakeout of pork and beef industries has intensified. Although profits for the industry as a whole were only slightly below average for all U.S. companies, there was extremely wide vari-

ation. Only a few companies were ever losing money (Wilson being an important example). But whenever a company felt a squeeze, it was ready to threaten—and fulfill its threat—to close plants. As a result many locals at small packing plants caved in and granted mid-term contract concessions. Bluebird in Philadelphia was one of the first when in 1980 its workers passed up a cost-of-living increase. During the next couple of years, although some concessions were granted, the international rejected concessions at Swift, Cudahy, Hygrade, Armour, Morrell, American Stores and Wilson only to see 35 plants shut down and thousands of workers thrown out of work. A few bitter strikes were fought, and at times the international went to battle against locals offering concessions. Despite tough employer resistance, the union organized a few plants. Yet, facing attack on many fronts, the union slipped from representing 80 percent of workers to about 70 percent. Despite deal-cutting that "just wiped us out at other locals," according to UFCW Vice President and Packinghouse Director Lewie Anderson, beef industry wages gained some stability around \$7.90 to \$8.20 an hour a couple of years ago.

The union continually faced, increasingly in pork packing, spin-off of plants that were reopened at low wages with no union, bankruptcy, unilateral cuts and threats of plant closings. In some cases workers rebelled against international union demands that concessions not be given. But increasingly the international also agreed to concessions. A cost-of-living freeze for several major packers was negotiated in 1981, and concessions were granted at Swift, Morrell and Hormel, among others, often as part of a wage reopening provision in the contract.

The last master contract set base wages at \$10.69 an hour, and no packinghouse workers have improved on that since 1980. In almost every instance, wages have been slashed, with or without union consent. Wages at the major pork packers range from \$6 an hour to \$10.69, with most in the

range of \$7.75 to \$9.50. The overall average wage for the industry peaked in 1982 at \$8.98, then moved down to \$8.24 by last year, now for the first time in many decades below the manufacturing average of \$9.17. Benefits have suffered similar deep cuts.

Who has benefitted from many of these workers losing 25 percent or more of their income? The average wage per pound of meat produced is now only about 4.17 cents, down from a high of 5.11 cents in 1982—roughly 2.6 percent of the retail price. After running ahead of the overall consumer price index in the '70s, the index of meat prices has moved upwards at a slower pace since 1980 and stabilized in recent years. But this small consumer relief has been bought at extraordinary cost to workers and a slight strengthening of average profits.

Concentration.

The strongest companies have grown richer, bigger and stronger, however. The money exacted from workers has gone into building the new plants that have driven competition in the glutted market and knocked off smaller or older companies. Output per worker-hour in the meatpacking industry has dramatically outstripped all U.S. industry. With 1960 as a base of 100, the index of meatpacking productivity increased to 267.7 in 1983 compared with 186 for all manufacturing. That has helped account for the loss of nearly 50,000 jobs over that period while total meat output has increased by nearly half. In such a situation, normally one would expect drastic price declines and/or much higher worker wages. The growing concentration is even more dramatic in the production of boxed beef, which accounted for 58 percent of all beef in 1982. The top four firms accounted for a commanding 66 percent of all boxed beef.

Pork production is still less concentrated: the top four accounted for 36 percent of hogs slaughtered in 1982. Yet the top four—and possibly four smaller firms behind them—so dominate the industry that

John W. Helmuth, chief economist for the House Small Business Committee, concluded that "the hog slaughtering industry at the national level in 1982 was in about the same relative position with regard to economic concentration as the steer and heifer slaughter industry was in 1979. The hog slaughtering industry appears to be at a crossroad: with one road leading to increased concentration and oligopolistic dominance by a few large firms...."

This growing concentration has an effect on sellers, that is, farmers and others raising cattle or hogs, as well as retail consumers. In many cattle-producing areas of the country four or fewer firms control nearly all the market. "We are now to a point where there are some real concerns about the numbers of buyers of cattle from farmers," University of Wisconsin agricultural economic professor Bruce Merion says. For each 10 percentage points increase in concentration, farmers tend to be paid about 15 cents less per hundred pounds, he estimates. That may not seem like much, but farmers now operate on such a slim margin that such a difference can be crucial.

Indeed, the rise of the new-style packers has encouraged greater agribusiness concentration and less diversified, stable and ecologically sound farming. The new boxed beef operations, such as IBP and Excel, have been largely responsible for the shift of cattle raising and slaughter to the Great Plains, where there is more reliance on huge feedlot operations, and away from Iowa, where cattle were raised as part of a balanced family farm operation. Tax policies that made industrial-scale beef production an attractive tax shelter underwrote and stimulated these feedlots and the expansion of corn and grain production, often with questionable ground-water irrigation, in the high plains. This further undermined the farm economies to the east and led to opening of lands that should not have been plowed. Indeed, it is significant that one study showed that boxed beef was not much more efficient than traditional operations, except when meat had to be transported over long distances. Thus the shift westward—and the encouragement of large-sale farmers or commercial feedlots that could deliver many hundreds of cattle of uniform size at one time—was not only encouraged by the IBP-style packers but also gave them a further advantage.

If the trend continues, both consumers and farmers do well as meatpacking workers may suffer more. "I think they do get above a competitive return," Merion said of IBP and Excel. "They pay less on the buying side and get more on the selling side."

Maybe, at least, towns in Kansas, Nebraska and Texas are benefitting? A careful study by reporter Len Ackland of the *Chicago Tribune* showed that many of the "beneficiaries" suffered the boomtown problems of strained physical facilities, rapid inflation and social problems from a transient workforce. Part of the problem stems from the extremely high turnover of the workforce—as much as 43 percent a month, or a complete change of the plant workforce in 2.5 months at one Excel plant is not unusual. Many of the workers are new ethnic minorities who are pitted against existing residents. Large numbers of legal and illegal Mexican workers are now employed in the new packinghouses, and there have been explosive tensions between some communities and the Southeast Asian "boat people" brought in as a desperate, docile work force.

There have been some improvements as a result of these years of change, but the growing concentration threatens consumers and farmers and the price paid by workers and their communities is thoroughly unwarranted. It was a chaotic, brutal, irrational and ultimately inefficient way of bringing change.

"If you get one or two major companies that are willing to have a high rate of turnover and bring in foreign nationals for \$5 an hour, they can put the rest of the industry up against the wall," Merion said. "Is that fair? Are we exploiting labor? No question, labor has paid a heavy price."

To be continued next issue



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LETTERS

If we had real social justice...

JOHAN JUDIS' ARTICLE ON CORPORATE raiders like T. Boone Pickens and Carl Icahn (*ITT*, June 26) has done a great service for the left. For months I've been reading about corporate "greenmailers" in the business magazines, but have been unable to determine how they affect my office. Now I know. Thanks!

I do object to one of Judis' assumptions in the story, though. In his concluding paragraphs, Judis suggests that greenmail is bad because it harms America's ability to "compete in the world market." That's exactly what the corporations say about decent wages, social welfare programs, a clean environment and anti-bribery laws—all, it seems, offend the great god "world market."

But from a socialist perspective, the world market itself is largely a device for setting American, European, Japanese and Third World workers against each other, so that all can be forced to accept wage concessions that benefit the corporate elite. The economic strategy involved—export promotion—has already proved itself to be a disaster in countries like Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and the Philippines. Why does it make sense to pursue it here? If we had real social justice in this country, American workers would be able to buy the full value of the goods they produce, without competing ruthlessly against workers overseas.

John Andrews
Washington

Passing era

JOHAN B. JUDIS' ABLE ANALYSIS OF THE plague of mergers and acquisitions (*ITT*, June 26) might add a fourth cause—obsessive subjugation to the no longer valid edict: "Grow or die."

In my lifetime the population of the U.S. has more than doubled. I came to Mooresville, Ind., in 1954. In the following 25 years the town and trading area's population tripled. Businesses had to grow with the markets or leave an empty space inviting aggressive competitors to take over.

But in the '70s the population boom subsided. By the '80s school enrollments indicated a halt, even a small drop in population growth. Business expansion faced diminishing returns. Growth was no longer a relatively simple matter of just keeping up with the market. The market was not growing.

Invading other markets against entrenched competition could be disastrous. It was usually safer to buy out existing firms if the prices were right.

Mooresville was not unique, but sometimes it is easiest to understand a condition by studying a small sample.

In small Mooresville corporations the top management people and their families usually included all the stockholders. Such managers were unlikely to aggrandize their own jobs at stockholder expense. But big corporation executives who had attained their eminence inspired by the holy vision of growth for growth's sake found it subversive to their deeply-held principles to accept holding their own as success.

As a rule, they own such a tiny percentage of the outstanding stock that any loss they might feel as stock owners is offset by the boosted salaries, bonuses and benefits.

Stockholders of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but your manipulators—and the loot they will grab as farewell gifts.

Robert Adams
Mooresville, Ind.

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

Making sense

THANKS TO DIANA JOHNSTONE FOR HER detailed and much needed report on the Bulgarian connection (*ITT*, July 9). From this part of the world, the commercial press' reporting on this matter failed to make sense, but it was difficult to get the facts needed to put together a reasonable account. Johnstone provides this much needed information.

Pamela Roby
Santa Cruz, Calif.

Taxing questions

IN THESE TIMES' EDITORIAL (JUNE 13) claims that "the fairest tax system" would scrap the corporate tax altogether and tax nothing but individual income. There are good reasons, however, for keeping corporate taxes on the books. I quote:

"Scrapping the corporate tax would raise three serious problems. First, the increasing amount of U.S. business income flowing to foreigners would escape taxation. Second, individuals would use the corporate form to avoid taxation. Corporations would be able to finance tax-free consumption for employees and stockholders by purchasing a wide variety of consumption goods, such as automobiles, housing, life insurance, health care, or legal services—indeed, almost anything. Third, repeal of the corporate income tax would represent a windfall gain for corporate owners of depreciable capital. For these reasons, we believe the corporate tax must be retained." (*Economic Choices* 1984, edited by M. Rivlin, page 99)

This succinct refutation of *In These Times*' editorial shows how little is to be gained from ideological reasoning that ignores analysis of the actual consequences of policy proposals.

Terry L. Smith
Takoma Park, Md.

Editor's note: This refutation is something less than that. First, income leaving the country either in the form of dividends or salaries could and should be taxed without affecting the domestic tax structure. Second, consumption by managers and stockholders can and should be taxable. Third, any changeover to a simple income tax could take such one-time gains into account.

None of the above contradict the principle espoused in our editorial. Of course, it is true that a fundamental reform of the tax system is not possible under present political circumstances. But if one assumes a majority in Congress with the best interests of the American people at heart, and not subservient to corporate interests, our proposal would be by far the simplest and fairest. It would also

make clear to everyone exactly who pays what proportion of their income to pay for various social programs.

Can't stop laughing

AS A MEMBER OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY, I have been very tolerant of Democrats who call themselves socialists—until now. The straw that broke the camel's back was "Synthesized keys stir real fears" by David O. Russell (*ITT*, April 24). Not only is this article utterly ridiculous, ludicrous and even slanderous, but it even goes so far as attempting to incite a reactionary approach to technology.

I am general secretary of the largest and oldest organization for the support of electronic music as an art. Electronic music, in various forms, has been with us since the late 1800s and will be for a long time (until we are bombed out of existence by the capitalist warmongers). The very idea that a synthesizer could replace a man is laughable; let alone absolutely false. Electronic music does have a place in the media today, but its popularity is due to the "sound."

Synthesizer music is merely another mode of expression, allowing the composer to have total access over the entire audio spectrum. Russell sounds like the old puritanical zealots who thought the piano was a disgraceful advance and the organ little more than a "machine" replacing wind instrument.

Despite Russell's claims, no replacement of musicians or instruments is or should be widespread. Instead of blaming the technology, he should be lambasting the cheapskate, money-grabbing producers who do the hiring. He should also note that many composers try electronic sound (like Jerry Goldsmith in the soundtrack to *Runaway*) to capture a mood or effect. Goldsmith doesn't need to skimp on orchestration, he's still the hottest film composer today. Also, Russell tends to ignore that synthesizer players, or "synthesists," are real musicians with just as much to "say" as acoustic instrumentalists or singers. Some of us are starving, too. Like the old lady in Central Park who plays a Casio electronic keyboard for nickels and dimes thrown in her cup.

ITT and the democratic left have always laid the blame on technology for repressive conditions for the working class. I am as working-class as they get, and have never been threatened by technology. When I left my office job here, the company had to hire four people and a computer to replace me. If any blame needs to be cast, try the managers, producers,

corporations and other money-grabbers, not the art or technology.

Our organization, the International Electronic Music Association, prides itself on being supported solely by our members in our non-profit efforts to promote struggling musicians who use synthesizers. We have a college radio network in which unknown artists' material gets airplay, we have a Collective Music Project that provides undiscovered musicians a chance to reach an audience without the capitalist record companies' intervention (we offer this service free) and we publish a national magazine (circulation 1,000) promoting new musicians in this promising art form. Why don't you talk more about independent music and less about how technology is—I can't stop laughing—hurting musicians.

James E. Finch
General Secretary, Central Committee
International Electronic Music Association
Salamanca, N.Y.

Nutshell

THOUGH RIVERS OF INK HAVE ALREADY been expended in the public discussion of Ronald Reagan and his policies, I have not read a more perfect and succinct summarization of the intellectual, moral and political vacuity of this man than Diana Johnstone's parenthetical observation (*ITT*, May 29) concerning Reagan's basic message: this world must be perfect because I got rich in it.

Lloyd Reinbeau
Frazeyburg, Ohio

Out of the closet and into print

ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME IN THESE TIMES PRINT- ed something on the subject of the AIDS epidemic (acquired immune deficiency syndrome)? The government isn't the only one turning a deaf ear to the problem: your article in "Shorts" (*ITT*, July 10) was the first we've heard out of you on the subject, and it was just a "mention"—the real subject of the piece was the annual flurry of "gay pride" parades. The scope of the health crisis, its origins, the health care industry's reaction, the politics of the hierarchy manipulating the research funding and the treatment given to those who are dying from the disease—there's a wealth of subjects here for the probing. Can't you find a reporter who's not too frightened or too disinterested to tackle any of them? Or don't you have readers who care?

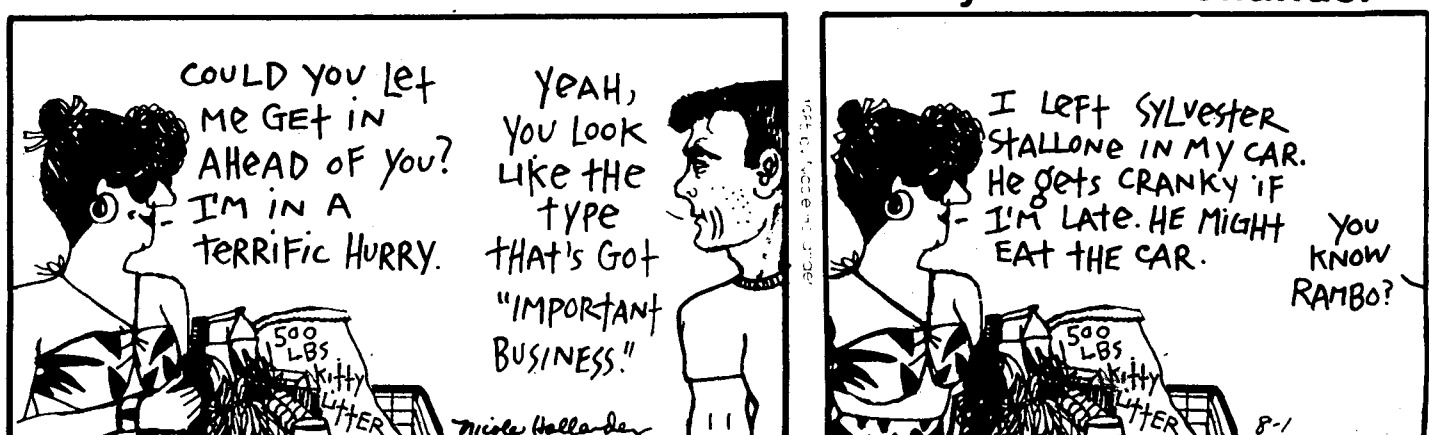
Ethyl Beard
Downers Grove, Ill.

Correction

The photograph on page 4, Vol. 9, No. 28, should have been credited to Diane Shumman.

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



PERSPECTIVES



The Stockholm syndrome, media psychoputdown

By Lawrence Weschler

AS THEY WERE BEING RELEASED a few weeks ago, many of the Americans who had been held hostage for 17 days by various groups of Lebanese Shi'ites were quoted as expressing a remarkable degree of sympathy with the situation of their captors. John Tetrake, the pilot of the hijacked TWA plane, for example, spoke of the way the ordeal had been "a learning experience"—specifically, that the American hostages had learned of the Shi'ites' "just grievance" concerning the continuing incarceration, without charges or due process, of their fathers, husbands, brothers and sons in the Atlit prison camp in Israel.

"Their problem is as grievous as our problem," Tetrake suggested. Allyn Conwell, who served as the group's spokesperson, expressed "genuine affection" for his captors—not only because,

in his opinion, the AMAL militiamen had saved his life and that of his fellow hostages in rescuing them from the clutches of their initial hijackers (two men whose vicious behavior the hostages were unanimous in denouncing), but also because he'd grown to know the Shi'ites as fellow human beings with concerns and longings similar to his own.

"I think the people in Atlit are in exactly the same situation we're in here," Conwell told a Cable News Network interviewer while still in Beirut. "And I know the families and loved ones and the countrymen of those prisoners are suffering just as much as the people in America are about the situation."

A few hours later, at the news conference in Damascus where he was flanked by all 38 of his fellow hostages, Conwell amplified on this theme. "To a man here," he said, "we all hope and pray that [the Lebanese detainees] in Israel are reunited with their families." Noting that he was, of course, not in possession of all the facts, he went on to say that "if, indeed,

they are not guilty of crimes, or if they are not legitimate war prisoners"—neither status, incidentally, being claimed by Israel as grounds for their continued detention—"if they're innocent people being held illegally, then we certainly pray for their freedom." Most of the 38 ex-hostages shown alongside Conwell seemed to nod agreement—no one objected to this characterization of their feelings.

Explaining it away.

Almost immediately all the networks beaming this report back from the Mideast returned to their Stateside anchorpeople who, one after the other, intoned their concern—and the concern of various unnamed administration sources—that the released American hostages seemed to be in thrall to certain aspects of the "Stockholm syndrome." This phrase, coined in the context of a bank hostage situation in Stockholm in 1973, supposedly involved the tendency of hostages placed in similar situations of intense pressure and mortal danger to identify with the needs and viewpoints and aspirations of their captors. Liberally proffered these days as the latest in psychopunditry, it implies a pathological disturbance, a sort of victimization, almost a form of brainwashing whose victims in turn require "debriefing" before they can be expected to see matters clearly once again. The possibility that the hostages in this particular Lebanese drama might in fact have undergone a "learning experience" from which they emerged with a broadened empathetic horizon, indeed, that they might now have certain fresh vantages to share with us, insights they could teach—this possibility has been dismissed out of hand, and as quickly

as possible: Tut, tut, chime the commentators, Stockholm syndrome!

There is another syndrome at work here, however—one that might be dubbed the "Washington syndrome," since most of the speculation regarding the Stockholmization of the recent hostages seemed to come from commentators based there. The Washington syndrome consists in an imperious imperviousness to the existence, let alone the lived reality, the experience, of other points of view. It consists in a serene inability to empathize—indeed, the celebration of that inability as a form of higher, more manly wisdom. Christopher Hitchens, writing in *The Nation* a few weeks ago in a different context, anticipated certain features of this recent outbreak of that syndrome: "In Washington these days," he remarked, "a person who asks the question 'How does this policy look from the perspective of country X?' is instantly bullied into silence and accused of 'blaming America first.' The exercise of sympathetic imagination is regarded as a sign of weakness rather than intelligence and curiosity. A hectic philistine mood prevails, whereby the United States in some special sense owns the world, and watch what you say, buster, or we'll start asking whose side you're on." The imputation of Stockholm syndrome in the case of our recently returned hostages is a way of questioning whose side they're on, while at the same time providing them with mitigating circumstances as a cleansing excuse.

A two-way street.

In this context, it's worth recalling the specific origins of the term "Stockholm syndrome." For in that particular Swedish hostage situation—a bungled robbery that resulted in a six-day police siege of a bank robber and his three hostages—the "humanization of the other" worked in both directions. True, the hostages gained an astonishing empathy for their captors, but the captor, in turn, developed a profound sense of fellow feeling for them as well—he ended up not being able to carry out his threat to kill them one by one if he were not granted his escape. *They all became human beings for each other.* In this world of unprecedented peril, this is precisely what we all need more than anything else—that the distances separating our various vantages be transcended, that we each recognize the precious human reality, the human integrity of the other. To take one tentative moment of such recognition and glibly dismiss it under the rubric of the Stockholm syndrome is to undermine, in a certain small way, the eventual chances for a humane peace for all of us.

Lawrence Weschler is a staff writer at the *New Yorker* and author of *The Passion of Poland* (Pantheon).

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PERSPECTIVES

By Noam Chomsky

THE HIJACKING OF TWA 847 offered fanatic ideologists renewed opportunities to dip into their bottomless wells of hypocrisy and moral idiocy. The editors of the *New York Times* opined that "there are crimes aplenty here": kidnapping and the murder of a hostage, the "laxity" and "supine negotiations" of the Greeks, and the failure of the U.S. to "punish Iran." The *Wall St. Journal* added the Air India bombing and a series of other atrocities, explaining that the roots of terrorists lie in the USSR and its satellites where the "training takes place." Meanwhile, Norman Podhoretz, in a widely printed column, called for bombing of Lebanon, Syria and Iran, even though "no doubt" this would mean "sentencing a number of Americans [the hostages] to death," because it is necessary "to risk life itself"—namely, the lives of others—"in defense of the national honor." This courageous call for "comporting ourselves with pride" by random slaughter was echoed by New York Mayor Edward Koch, William Safire and others.

Putting aside the mad bombers, these rather typical fulminations are marred by a few omissions. As for where "the training takes place," one suspect in the Air India bombing was trained in a mercenary school in Alabama, and Miami has been a major center of international terrorism since Kennedy launched his "secret war" against Cuba, and remains so today, particularly for terrorist attacks against Nicaragua. Keeping to Lebanon, one of the worst atrocities, a car bombing that killed more than 80 people and wounded 200 others, was carried out by terrorists trained by the CIA. Imagine the reaction to comparable revelations about the USSR.

Lebanese have a few grievances against the U.S. that go unnoticed by the *Times* editors, not only murderous bombardment but also support for Israeli terrorism over many years. Consider just one village, Khiam, a few miles from the Israeli border. Much of the population was driven out by Israeli bombing through the '70s and the remainder were expelled in the course of Israel's invasion in 1978 apart from a few dozen old people who remained, and were duly massacred by Israel's Haddad militia. Last April, international relief officials and former prisoners reported that Israel and its Lebanese mercenaries had established a secret prison in Khiam, where prisoners were beaten and tortured while the Red Cross was refused admission. As the Lebanese resistance drove Israel out of most of the south, military correspondent Ze'ev Schiff, explaining Israel's policy, warned of the fate of Khiam (and Nabatiyeh, where most of the population of 60,000 was driven out by Israeli bombing, with hundreds killed) if matters did not proceed to Israel's satisfaction in south Lebanon. This is one small example of the "crimes aplenty here" that have escaped the attention of the *Times*.

But crimes—even those reported—are not crimes if committed by the U.S. or its clients. Israeli terrorist attacks against Lebanon—many not even on the pretext of retaliation—were often reported, but not considered a blemish on the record of the state whose "high moral purpose" (*Time*, Oct. 11, 1982) is the object of such awe and that is lavishly rewarded for its performance by the American taxpayer. When Israel bombed Baalbek in January 1984, with 400 casualties including 150 children in a destroyed school, the facts were reported without prejudice to Israel's lofty status as "a country that cares for human life" (*Washington Post*, June 30, 1985). Had Israel been the target of a similar terrorist attack, we would be



Crimes by victims are called terrorism

hearing about a revival of Nazism. Or, to take only the most striking current example, the TWA hijacking was carried out to compel Israel to release more than 700 Lebanese prisoners held in secret Israeli detention camps. The hijackers were reported to be relatives or friends of Israeli-held hostages. These include prisoners scheduled for release in an exchange in November 1983 but secretly moved to Israel in violation of the agreement and held incommunicado without even a Red Cross visit until July 1984. Some 1,200 were taken to Israel in the course of the Israeli retreat. After the TWA hijacking, the press proclaimed that they were to have been released, but Israel has made it clear that they are hostages, held captive to ensure that the Lebanese will observe Israeli demands. This crime has not been held to be a part of the scourge of terrorism that threatens civilization itself. There are no calls to bomb Israel.

Similarly, few recall that the first airplane hijacking in the Mideast—perhaps anywhere—was carried out in 1954, when Israeli state terrorists captured a Syrian civilian jet, with the intent "to get hostages in order to obtain the release" of Israeli soldiers caught on a mission inside Syria (Prime Minister Moshe Sharett). And Israel's regular practice of piracy to capture civilians is also passed over lightly here, along with numerous other crimes, some ignored, some reported with little comment; for example, the seizure of 19 Lebanese villagers by Israeli troops and the expulsion of 2,000 Shi'ites from their villages under bombardment by Israeli mercenaries, or the brutal beating of captured Finnish UN soldiers by these mercenaries under the eyes of Israeli officers, who did nothing to help

them—all this in the midst of the TWA hijacking crisis.

Israel's hostages were captured in the course of its "iron fist" operations, a terrorist campaign designed to compel civilians in southern Lebanon to terminate the resistance against the Israeli occupying army. Contrary to reports in the U.S., this

The term terrorism has lost all meaning as administration propaganda has redefined it to omit acts by its friends.

is not a new policy. The savage attacks against civilians in southern Lebanon for the past 15 years were justified by Labor dove Abba Eban in the following terms: "There was a rational prospect, ultimately fulfilled, that affected populations would exert pressure for the cessation of hostilities." The "affected populations" were therefore subjected to terror bombing and other atrocities, with little concern or even mention by the paymasters.

One-way terrorism.

The TWA hijacking, surely a terrorist act, was a direct response to one of the vastly more serious acts of terrorism in Lebanon by our Israeli client. President Reagan is always quick to defend alleged retaliation by his friends. In his news conference on

the TWA hijacking, he was asked for comment about South African terror in Botswana and Angola, but refrained, because it was not clear whether this was "retaliation" against the ANC (there is "no question" about its "violence" and "murdering," he said, but about South Africa we withhold judgment). Reagan's conception of "terror" and "retaliation" were further clarified by his letter, which elicited no comment in the American press, informing the government of Israel that the TWA crisis had strengthened relations between the two countries; so much for the Israeli-held hostages. Similarly, relations were strengthened, as measured by the increase in aid, after the destruction of southern Lebanon, the bombing of defenseless West Beirut, and the Sabra-Shatila massacres in 1982.

"Terrorists and those who support them must be held to account," our chief terrorist commander thundered, but only certain terrorists: not the ones who attack Botswana or Nicaragua, or massacre Salvadoran villagers in air strikes coordinated by American pilots or bomb Palestinian refugee camps or kidnap Lebanese civilians—or their paymasters. As always, there is criminal terrorism and civilized terrorism.

The term "terrorism" refers to violent acts carried out to attain political ends. Terrorism can be "wholesale" or "retail," conducted by states or individuals. The term has utterly lost its meaning in the course of recent administration propaganda exercises that have redefined it so as to exclude state and individual terrorism conducted by the U.S. and its clients. The purpose of the propaganda campaign is transparent. Reagan's programs were basically two: a vast increase in the state sector of the economy to support high technology industry through the military system, and its natural accompaniment, escalation of the threat and use of violence to ensure American dominance of much of the world. For such programs, jingoist fanaticism at home is a necessity. Invoking "international terrorism," as conveniently redefined and with ample resort to fabrication where needed, is a useful technique. The educated classes and the generally servile media have played their appointed role, with rare departures. Orwell would have been impressed.

This is not to deny that there are kernels of truth in the ravings of Reagan and his acolytes, or the more measured words of those who contribute to the deception with faint protest but general obedience. Many of those designated as "terrorists" surely are united by hatred of "our international stature," as Reagan proclaimed, and do resist the violence and terror we unleash against them, in Central America, the Mideast and elsewhere, exhibiting what Reagan perceives as an intent to "expel America from the world." Naturally their resistance is regarded by American elites as a crime, a "conspiracy" to steal what is ours: the human and material resources of much of the world, which in large part have been ours to rob and exploit.

Furthermore, while terrorism has always largely been the monopoly of powerful states, it is also a weapon of national and resistance movements. This was true of the American revolution, of pre-1948 Zionism and the State of Israel, of the resistance to the Nazis in Europe, to the Americans in South Vietnam, to the Russians in Afghanistan and to the U.S. and Israel in Lebanon, among numerous examples. For the powerful, the weapons of the weak are an abomination, while their own wholesale terrorism is merely the prerogative of more civilized people. The current scene offers little that is new, apart, perhaps, from the depths of cynicism that have been revealed.

Noam Chomsky's most recent book is *Fateful Triangle*.

Sisterhood Is Global

By Robin Morgan

Doubleday, 814 pp., \$12.95

By B. Ruby Rich

IN THE '80S, A TIME WHEN THE U.S. seems increasingly xenophobic and isolated from information about the rest of the world, the publication of a massive, 800-page anthology dedicated to the history and current status of women in nearly 70 countries throughout the world is a necessary and noteworthy event. It is brain-numbing to read the book straight through. More likely, it will be used as a reference work, consulted for particular countries when a reader's interest is piqued or when world events shine the random spotlight of fame on some new spot.

Why compile such a volume? Perhaps, simply, so that it could exist.

Some suspicion at least is called for. Robin Morgan has a checked political history as the quintessential individualist of feminism. Since 1973, if not earlier, she has called herself an ex-leftist, even as her involvement with anti-pornography politics has moved her into closer alignment with the right. At best, her old vision of "metaphysical feminism" that she

The essays themselves are uneven, varying both in substance and length, some firmly grounded in history while others are obliquely fictional, some useful or eye-opening, while others remain irrelevant or even deceptive. Some of the articles ground themselves in the political context specific to their countries, while others present a view of feminism or women's status so self-contained as to render the country or period in question nearly invisible.

Turn back the clock.

In the section on Iran, for example, Mahnaz Afkhami writes eloquently of the misogynistic, turn-back-the-clock fanaticism of Khomeini and his supporters, but evidences no disquiet whatsoever about the years of wasted lives under the Shah. She blithely mentions the decision, in 1966, to invite Princess Ashraf, the twin sister of the Shah, to serve as honorary president for the newly founded Women's Organization of Iran. She was "the most powerful woman in the country.... Her patronage was to assure the organization political leverage in the battle against its fanatic enemies." It comes as little surprise, then, to read that Afkhami was this organization's secretary general and now lives in exile in the U.S.

INPRINT

FEMINISM

Morgan's naive global village

organize in Brazil." Yet Prado complains about pressures from the World Bank (a massive determinant in Brazil's future) on family planning and population control, with many funds for women's studies projects coming from this source, which is linked, problematically, with abhorrent policies.

Other essays pursue the political issues faced by any feminist organizing and confront the issues of class, race, national identity or traditional political power. Carmen Lugo's essay on women in Mexico, for instance, situates itself within the health conditions, housing shortages, illiteracy and economic crisis of the country.

within her native country. This Cuban author is clearly, indisputably, an exile.

So why the disguise? Her biography, unlike the others, gives little information about her. But judging from the reliance on UN sources and her access to a Cuban official involved in international development work, she is a staff member of the United Nations—and thus in violation of the UN codes of ethics and the ensuing need to hide behind a pseudonym. But this need has been turned to political advantage: "the silenced one," as though silenced, not by her employer, but by Fidel Castro, whom she vituperatively attacks in

than to existentialism.

We, as readers of *Sisterhood Is Global*, face a dilemma, albeit less existential, ourselves. Its blend of myth/legend with data/history is an explosive and manipulative mix. Its mythic construction of a unitary sisterhood, a feminism that can remain a singular noun without need for a plural, mutes the serious differences confronting women globally. (Tinne Vammen, the Danish contributor, makes this point in relation to women of developed vs. developing nations, but is rebutted by Morgan in her introduction.) Its rejection of all existing political models and cry for a separate feminism, absolutely autonomous, to redeem us all, is a '60s credo resurrected by an '80s world.

The credo of imaginary autonomy and unity, however, has a political meaning in the '80s that it never had in the era of its origin. We have been through too much to accept such a disingenuous stance uncritically. This disavowal of politics denies its own trajectory even as it strives to advance it. Why disavow the left because it is male and then gear up for the equally male United Nations? Or, alternately, why hide that anti-Communism under a facade of disavowing all political parties? After all, nearly a dozen of the contributors to the anthology hold political positions in their own countries; a dozen list UN affiliations, past or present, in their bios; many more are journalists or heads of social service agencies. This is a top-down anthology, though many of its Third World contributors save its soul.

Robin Morgan has used the creation of this anthology to build a formidable power base. The Ford Foundation and other funders paid for a "think tank" conference last fall that brought 25 of the book's contributors to New York for a series of exclusive meetings and receptions. A second conference was recently held in Texas, funded by a private donor, geared to planning strategy for the UN's Nairobi world conference. Morgan has established her own think tank since publication—the Sisterhood Is Powerful Institute—that is easily poised for the receipt of international development funds. In such a context, the anti-Communism of the anthology is indeed troubling.

If Morgan is launching a new feminist empire, though, why are so many Third World women with seemingly different agendas involved? Are they being used, part of a package that can attract the big money? How do the Latin American authors, then, feel about a political agenda that dictates five entries on the Caribbean...and no mention at all of Puerto Rico? Since the anthology's publication, *Ms* magazine has provided Morgan with another forum, devoting its March issue to a special international focus...with yet another briefing from the still-anonymous "silenced one."

It should be instructive to follow the next series of movements by Robin Morgan and her foundation, particularly at—and after—the Nairobi conference this summer. As a text, *Sisterhood Is Global* has some things to recommend it and many others to warrant caution. As a blueprint for political organizing, however, it's alarming.

B. Ruby Rich is a New York-based critic on issues of film, feminism and sexuality for the *Village Voice*, *American Film and Signs*.



has updated in this book to call "planetary feminism" is astoundingly naive; at worst, there's a hint of Ayn Rand around her edges.

Morgan may claim to position herself outside of politics, above political parties, in some imaginary locale where all women are autonomous and unified, but that vision was more appropriate to the first thrills of the late '60s than to the wiser realities of the '80s. Nowadays, we know that even women's movements have a right and a left. And so do anthologies.

Each country receives a two-part treatment in Morgan's book. First, there appears a preface of statistics and historical data, including the "Herstory" of women in the recorded period and the "Mythography," a compendium of myths and legends having to do with women figures of national legend, all written and researched by Morgan's 11-woman research team and published, in encyclopedic fashion, unsigned. Second, there is a commissioned essay by a woman either native to, or exiled from, the country at hand, followed by a biography on the contributor and suggested further readings. The anthology as a whole ends with a lengthy bibliography.

The section on Britain, while not blinkered to this extent, nevertheless concerns only one radical-feminist sector of the movement and ignores the important issues of class politics and racism that have increasingly occupied feminists there. There is no mention of the important role played by women of color in Britain, nor of the key political issues (the Nationality Act, for example, or the relevance of Greenham to black women) being addressed. Nor does Amanda Sebestyen, described as "a long-time activist," ever mention the left feminist tradition evidenced over and over in articles in such journals as *Feminist Review* or *Spare Rib*. And Margaret Thatcher appears only as a reference to "our female M.P." in one footnote.

Danda Prado's essay on women in Brazil, by contrast, takes pains to trace the historical relationship between a women's movement and the left in her country, and places her own position within that dynamic. She also notes, in passing, that the UN International Women's Year was extremely important as a legitimizing force: "This was the only way to maneuver in a period of severe repression against anyone who tried to

"An alliance with political parties is fundamental for the expansion of the women's movement," she writes, and goes on to explicate the decisions now facing the Mexican women's movement.

Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, in her essay on Portugal, again emphasizes this same question. "When political evolution comes to a deadlock, when so-called democratic institutions get stifled...is women's struggle possible? Doesn't it become an isolated effort re-creating the pattern of earlier feminisms? Or does it in itself carry such potential that, together with other forces, it may evoke a new turn in the socio-political picture as a whole?" Pintasilgo does not answer her own question, but unlike most of the contributors to this anthology, at least she raises it.

Eyebrow raising.

The section that is most eyebrow-raising in the anthology, and the one most likely to tip readers off to Morgan's agenda, is devoted to Cuba. The entry is written by a pseudonymous author ("La Silenciada"). Almost no pseudonyms have been used in the anthology, and where they are (Chile, Haiti), it is to protect the author's identity

Is there some imaginary locale where all women are unified? the give-away style of the anti-Communist exile.

She uses her UN sources selectively, citing only those cases that might be interpreted negatively. After all, the latest draft resolution on the "Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women" presented to the General Assembly was supported by Cuba and most other nations...and opposed only by the U.S. This year, the board of trustees of the UN Women's Research Institute met in Havana. I found myself wondering if "La Silenciada" was invited. From the perspective of her piece, it is clear she hasn't been back since her moment of exile. But then, her piece disguises even this.

What, then, is such a piece doing in this anthology? Morgan provides a clue in her own introduction when she titles a section "Beyond the Right, the Left, the Center—and the Law" and then goes on to critique only the left. Politics for Morgan has become, she writes, "a truly existential tactical dilemma." She is too modest. She clearly has her tactics in position, but they're closer to Susan Sontag's recent pronouncements

From the Fair: The Autobiography of Sholom Aleichem
Translated by Curt Leviant
Viking, 288 pp., \$20

By Morris Dickstein

WRITTEN IN YIDDISH some 70 years ago, abridged into English 40 years later as *The Great Fair*, Sholom Aleichem's unfinished autobiography is a book to be relished and celebrated rather than reviewed. Because of the inadequacy of early translations of his work and the remoteness of the world he wrote about, this incomparable master of Yiddish prose has turned into more of a legend than a writer.

Despite the tireless exertions of critics like Irving Howe, his reputation persists as a folksy humorist—the Jewish Mark Twain—whose sentimental fables of shtetl life provided material for a popular Broadway musical. By telling the “true story” behind the stories, *From the Fair* gives us precious insight into its protean author, who often hid behind the rich colloquial monologues of his favorite characters.

Born Sholom Rabinowitz in 1859 in the town of Pereyaslev in the Ukrainian Pale, Sholom Aleichem spent much of his childhood in the smaller town of Voronko which, under the name of Kasrilevke, became the archetypal Russian shtetl of Jewish fiction. His father, as luckless in business as his son would later be, was a man of some “modern” tendencies, a village intellectual who knew secular Hebrew letters as well as religious learning.

In defiance of his pious brothers, he eventually allowed the precocious Sholom to attend the Russian district school, which was an important step from ghetto isolation toward a wider culture. He also gave Sholom the dubious gift of a shrewish stepmother, a woman of a thousand curses, that the boy, with his enormous talent for mimicry and mockery, wrote down and alphabetized into a colorful lexicon of insults. “The hero of this autobiography must admit that many of the curses and maledictions in his works came straight from his stepmother’s invective.”

Great comic writers.

Many great comic writers and performers show an early gift for mimicry—Philip Roth is another self-confessed example. In doting Jewish families these clever monsters, puckishly aping everything around them, can often have it both ways, winning applause while venting their irreverence and hostility. Whenever Sholom gets in trouble for making fun of people—as when his little lexicon falls into his parents’ hands—his father is too delighted to punish him.

Forced to leave his cherished Voronko for Pereyaslev, young Sholom takes comfort in one thing: “Thank God, there were plenty of people to imitate. The way Germiza the teacher read the Torah, for example. Sholom studied him for two Sabbaths in a row. Germiza the pockmarked teacher shook one leg, contorted his face, bared his yellow teeth, stretched his long neck, moved his pointy nose up and down, and concluded the Torah reading with an odd, quavering, guttural voice: ‘See, I have set before you this day life and good and death and

evil.’ You could have died laughing. Everyone who heard Sholom imitating Germiza reading the Torah swore he had him down pat.”

Offended, the victim complains to his father, but Sholom saves his skin by doing a command performance for the old man. “Never before had Sholom seen his father laugh the way he laughed that day. He could hardly catch his breath.”

This episode can be read as a parable of Sholom Aleichem’s relation to his mass audience. Yiddish readers loved his work for its hilarious, lethal accuracy, not because it flattered them. He paid them the tribute of close attention. He was one of them: why else would he chasten them? Far from sentimentalizing his fellow Jews he held up a bright mirror to their foibles and follies.

His minor characters make up a gallery of grotesques in the comic tradition of Gogol. Even his way of telling the tale shows how little he spared himself, let alone his readers. By writing his autobiography in the third person, far from his usual style of oral monologue, he achieves a bemused distance on his own life. He turns his experiences into impersonal story, fit for laughter and tears, instead of subjective memoir. This satiric distance brings us closer, paradoxically, to the boy he was rather than the man he became, a man in whom the pranks and yearnings of childhood merged with a strain of sadness, even disillusionment.

It’s typical of Sholom Aleichem’s many-layered prose, though perhaps shocking to the English reader, that one of the most solemn sentences in the Bible is casually imbedded in the impish caricature of poor Germiza. This isn’t simply his youthful demons extended into the zestful comic

Far from sentimentalizing his fellow Jews, Aleichem held up a mirror to their foibles and follies.



© Geoffrey Clements

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Sholom Aleichem's world of his childhood

writing of the older man. Though the Torah and the Hebrew language were held sacred by Eastern European Jews, they were also domesticated into familiar elements of everyday life, as reflected in the many Hebrew words and phrases worn lightly in Yiddish—an imminent, ordinary spirituality that could almost be taken for granted.

As Aleichem wrote, the world of his childhood had already largely gone out of existence, buffeted by modernity and secularism, torn to pieces by war, persecution, vast migrations and the pressure of competing ideologies. Sholom Aleichem’s utter mastery of its idiom is not that of a nostalgic elegist of “a world that is no more,” but that of a supreme ironist with a finely developed sense of the ridiculous and a perfect ear for living speech as the verbal music of a character and a culture.

A wartime book.

Though Sholom Aleichem had begun writing his autobiography as early as 1908, *From the Fair* is essentially a wartime book, pro-

duced as a series of weekly newspaper sketches in 1915-16, the last year-and-a-half of his life, when he had finally taken refuge in New York after nearly a decade of rootless wandering around Western Europe.

For all his reknown as the best-loved Jewish writer in the world, he was desperately poor. He had lost his wife’s family fortune years earlier in stock and commodity trading, had been swindled by all his publishers who bought his work outright and paid no royalties, and had been driven from Russia by the pogroms of the early years of the century. His health was precarious, and the outbreak of the war cut him off from most of his readers and shattered his hopes for the future of the Jews.

All these disasters, cheerfully chronicled many years later by one of his daughters, leave barely a shadow on the buoyant, high-spirited pages of this book, which covers only his first 20 years. It’s hard to escape the feeling that the author, a dying man, is turning away from the grim present to re-

capture an era of his own life.

It would be a hopeless task to unbraid the strands of his complex feelings about that nearly extinct world. Secular and rational in outlook, fluent in Hebrew and Russian as well as Yiddish, devoted to his craft with the minute intensity of a true artist, he had in many ways abandoned the old world at the same time he remained faithful to it. His brilliant recreation of the outlook of boyhood brings to mind *Huckleberry Finn*. When he recalls the death of his mother he

Aleichem was a folk humorist and supreme ironist who wrote of the dying world of the shtetl.

remembers not only his grief but the tingling adventure of being sent on a faraway journey to stay with his maternal grandparents, whom he had never met.

Sholom Aleichem compares life to a great fair, swirling with the commotion of each man hawking his particular wares. The hubbub of quirky characters and flavorful stories is what captures his fancy. Transported from home for the first time, he hears tales from the coachman of horse dealers, gypsies, thieves and “prophets,” a whole philosophy of life. “The things the children learned from Meir Velvel in two days they couldn’t have learned elsewhere in two years.”

On a later journey they have a coachman who is as careworn and taciturn as the other was sparkling and voluble, and this teaches the boy a lesson about the sheer mystery and diversity of character. The boy evolves from a mimic into a novelist, someone who can say in the fewest possible words that a town notable, a “yellow-haired chap in an alpaca gaberdine, was so conceited it was beneath his dignity even to talk to himself.” Such figures are types, like Dickens’, but they are types with character.

As he describes it, Sholom Aleichem grew up in a pious but beleaguered culture given to incessant moralizing, fearful of the many temptations that could lead children astray, everything from sex to apostasy. In a wickedly funny chapter called “Theft, Cardplaying, and Other Sins,” Sholom Aleichem gleefully exposes the underside of shtetl life and confirms what every Jewish moralist knows about the workings of the “evil impulse.” His delight in the unruliness and anarchy of childhood suggests that his work is one long escape from pious moralizing—from modern social theories as much as from rabbinical homilies.

In this way too the mature author follows in the footsteps of the young scamp and scoundrel, who couldn’t resist lampooning a woman with a goiter or a man with a beaky nose and a sing-song whine—all part of the human comedy from which the solemn and the pompous avert their eyes. Behind the cruel sharpness of Sholom Aleichem’s gaze is a deeper generosity, a wry tolerance for the variations of life as it is actually lived, not as we would wish it to be lived.

As a teenager in the late ’50s, I read this book in its previous translation and was so charmed that it made me want to become a writer. If this world could be written about, so could mine. If Sholom Aleichem could travel the distance from Voronko, I could make it from the Lower East Side.

The author emerges from the constricted but luminescent world of the Jewish Pale not by rebelling or leaving it behind, as so many of his contemporaries were doing, but by turning it into literature, making the despised Yiddish language his supple medium for heightening his readers’ consciousness of themselves. His authorial distance triggers their shock of recognition. Today that electric rapport with like-minded readers is a thing of the past, and his books in translation evoke a lost world, as they had already begun to do in his own time. ■

Morris Dickstein teaches literature and film at Queens College and is the author of Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties.

ART«»ENTERTAINMENT

NPR: drifting
rightward
or simply
adrift?

By Pat Aufderheide

LOOK UP AS YOU ENTER THE Washington, D.C., headquarters of National Public Radio (NPR), where every weekday "Morning Edition" and "All Things Considered" are conceived, produced and broadcast. You will see inscribed over the doorway one word: "Caution."

Or at least you should. That's the byword these days among staffers feeling pressured from the ideological right and the Reagan administration, and also feeling pinched by financial troubles. And because caution is uppermost on everyone's mind, don't expect anyone to talk much about these problems, even when they're not on the air.

Listeners on the left have interpreted that mood with alarm. From Boulder, Colo., subscriber Kenneth Wilson recently wrote the network, "I am growing increasingly disappointed with your reporting on Nicaragua. It is becoming increasingly like AP/UPI reporting.... In fact, since Charles Castaldi's first-hand account of the funeral of slain coffee workers in northern Nicaragua, I have detected self-censorship on your part of accurate descriptions of the complex realities of Nicaragua. You seem content to allow the president's absurd statements to stand uncorrected."

And in these pages reader R.B. DuBoff has argued (*In These Times*, March 27) that leftists should withhold support for NPR until it improves its treatment of left views. DuBoff finds commentary weighted toward conservatism (Richard Pipes, John McLaughlin) and charges, "right-wing spokesmen are frequently interviewed alone, whereas representatives of the left are almost always offset by conservatives."

Where some listeners see intent, staffers tend to see drift. "This kind of don't-try-anything-that-might-make-waves attitude has

been creeping up on us for years," says one with a world-weary sigh (don't ask the city or sex of informants, please). Another says of the range of NPR's commentators, "Most of them are neither left nor right—if anything, *that's* the problem. It is true that when Bob Kuttner left [to become an economics commentator for the *New Republic*], nobody here rushed to fill his slot." Some peg the onset of drift to the 1980 election: "I don't think we do as much coverage of the losers from this administration—especially labor," says one. And one notable blank spot last year was coverage of Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign on its own terms.

But news and information director Robert Seigel, in a lengthy conversation with *In These Times*, argued differently. "I've been here since 1976 and I've seen some changes, but none I would read as political. The big difference is that before 1983 we had more money. We had trouble with the Jackson coverage, because it was not a simple issue. It was not a serious bid for the candidacy, although it was an important political phenomenon. But the reason why we missed it was not because of pressure from the right." Among commentators, he admits, "there is nobody especially New Left, but we don't always have every spot filled. There isn't a real neo-conservative commentator at the moment either." He agrees that NPR editors and reporters are "careful" these days, but says, "That is not a pejorative word."

For the ideological right, that mood looks like an opportunity to renew its attacks on NPR's news. Public broadcasting has never been a favorite institution for the right, and objections were focused by the Heritage Foundation's 1980 *Mandate for Leadership*, which called for abolishing federal funds to public broadcasting, depicting it as by and for a snooty minority of opera-loving liberals.

Two recent reports target the enemy more precisely. In May, self-appointed media watchdog group Accuracy in Media (AIM) denounced NPR's public affairs as "tax-supported monuments to 1970s radicalism," and "an easy mark for Soviet disinformation operations."

AIM's thumbnail sketch incorporates complaints from a wide range of right organizations: "They give strong support to the 'peace,' anti-defense and anti-nuclear lobbies. They amplify the voices of the militant feminists, the homosexual activists, the most radical elements of the civil rights and environmental movements, and the trendy-left intellectual and cultural elite." Following in June was a Heritage Foundation paper once again recommending that federal government pull its majority funding out of public radio.

NPR's crimes are two-fold: bad taste (the complaints range from hearing the word "bird crap" on the air to coverage of homosexual issues) and biased reporting. "Broadcast segments," the report charges, "are openly hostile toward the Reagan administration and routinely feature the work and rhetoric of such ideological leftists as the poet Allen Ginsberg, Common Cause President Fred Wertheimer, socialist Michael Harrington and one-time network journalist Daniel Schorr."

Other organizations have also taken up NPR-bashing. For instance, a syndicated writer employed by the U.S. Industrial Council, Anthony Harrigan, published a column last fall calling for the shutdown of NPR news shows for their liberal "propagandist content."

To Harrigan's charges, Seigel cited such defenders of conservative views on NPR public affairs as David Gergen, Donald Lambro and Kevin Phillips. "This is hardly a line-up designed to advance liberal ideas to the public radio audience," he argued.

To *In These Times*, however, Seigel offered an explanation that suggests right-wing complaints might not be assuaged by such measures. He thinks the reason the right perceives NPR as the enemy is simply that rightists tend to support the status quo, while NPR assumes the responsibility of looking for breaking news and emerging stories. "The Heritage Foundation sees us as left-leaning for covering the sanctuary movement. Well, it's a new phenomenon. It's interesting. NPR brings the news from the American Southwest to people in the Northeast—the idea is putting the country in touch with itself."

"Public diplomacy."

The ideological right has a friendly ally in the Reagan administration. In 1981, the administration tried to sabotage the whole system by cutting already-allocated funds, and then openly called for an end to its public financing. These days the rhetoric is quieter and the attacks more sophisticated. Reagan has vetoed two funding bills for public broadcasting in the last year, for instance, and threatens to do it again if provisions for commercializing the system aren't included.

Further, public radio has been included in the administration's campaign to monitor and engage the media, under the rubric "public diplomacy." Such State Department "public diplomats" as Otto Reich, in charge of Latin American issues, scour the media for unfavorable coverage of foreign policy. The vigilance can be unsettling, especially for a public affairs service dependent on federal funds.

"My complaint with the State people," says Seigel, "is that they complain but they are rarely a source of information. They are supposed to help reporters with information otherwise unavailable, to make stories more accurate. They always say they'll get us in-

formation when it's been declassified, but somehow it's never declassified.

"They are set up to monitor and then go in and argue with the media. What kind of office of the federal government is this?" he says, exasperated. "I think it's a violation of the First Amendment."

An incident last winter revealed those tactics in action: Reporter Charles Castaldi filed a story on the economic war being waged by *contras* against the Nicaraguan government. The story focused on an attack on a coffee cooperative, in which civilians, including several children, were killed. The story ended with the heartrending sound of women screaming and sobbing over the bodies.

Back in Washington, editors concerned with balance got in touch with *contra* leader Bosco Matamoros, and NPR's Noah Adams spent several minutes in a follow-up interview to the story, trying to get Matamoros to answer a simple question: were *contras* attacking civilian targets? Matamoros dodged the question with vague charges that the Sandinistas regularly attributed their own atrocities to the *contras*—a charge that sounded weak in the wake of ambient sounds of anguish from Nicaragua.

Two weeks later Castaldi filed another report, this time a you-are-there piece, from the funeral in Esteli of telephone company workers who had been on their way to pick coffee when ambushed by *contras*. It featured a woman sobbing at the front of the church, "Dear God, please make these Yankees calm down," and left listeners with the sound of dirt being shoveled onto a grave.

The funeral story triggered a lively response at the State Department—phones started ringing immediately—and it also upset news director Seigel. Staffers heard him during a loud debate in the hallway saying, "It sounds like Sandinista

National Public Radio

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propaganda!"

To *In These Times*, Seigel said, "I personally objected to it—I found it 100 percent emotional. We could do a piece about people killed in war about anybody, in just the same way. And you have to ask yourself, why did we run this very moving, intricately produced piece about a particular death?" (NBC and CBS also carried footage from the Estelí funeral to illustrate the civilian cost of the U.S.-backed *contra* war, apparently without such doubts.)

As if in an attempt to balance the coverage, Matamoros reappeared the next day on "Morning Edition," arguing his political pos-

ing effect, and even some traceable results. Within a week of Reich's visit to NPR's M Street offices, he was featured in an NPR interview notable for the softball quality of its questions. The editor who authorized the economic war stories, Paul Allen, recently resigned; some staffers assert that Seigel encouraged him to do so, while Seigel maintains Allen was simply frustrated with the demands of the foreign desk. (Allen, in a brief conversation from his new job as press secretary for Sen. Christopher Dodd [D-CT], simply said, "It was mostly for a lot of personal reasons. Castaldi's reports stopped, apparently for rea-

kiewicz's project to float NPR free of federal funds collapsed, followed by his resignation. Since then the network has been on an austerity budget, stripping it of resources for special or long-range news coverage. Individual grants earmarked for particular subjects are eagerly accepted, and while they provide needed resources, they also unavoidably set priorities. Staffers concerned with the continuity of topical coverage may find themselves derailed to a special-fund commissioned project. And here, as elsewhere in the network these days, the controversial tends to get downplayed. A report on the Eisenhower era, pro-

programming; they will each choose whether to keep the money or buy NPR's services. At one stroke, the reorganization shatters the NPR network, turning it into another program service instead—and, potentially, not only a poorer but a more timid one.

Every network offends its affiliates at times—local stations are always more vulnerable to pressure from local clout than a national entity is—but under a network arrangement cancellation comes at a high price. Under the buyback plan, many stations will have to take the long view—support for a national program service—in the face of pressure to use the money for short-term gain locally. Many strapped stations may not be able to resist.

NPR's old in-house enemies are gleeful at this turn of events. American Public Radio, the distributor of "Prairie Home Companion" that has piggybacked on NPR to become, in three years, the largest distributor of public radio programming in the country, rejoices in decentralization; a weakened NPR means opportunities for APR.

And the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, NPR's mother corporation and holder of the purse-strings, also approves. No one on the CPB board, of any political persuasion, has forgotten 1981, when NPR lobbied Congress separately from CPB and won more money and control over it than CPB had recommended for radio. A weaker NPR is a quieter NPR, from CPB directors' perspective.

You could feel the tension between NPR and CPB at the latest CPB board meeting. At stake was the future of weekend "All Things Considered," which NPR intends to cancel in the fall unless CPB raises the amount of its 1986 allocation. Ruth Hirschman, general manager of Santa Monica public station KCRW, spoke passionately of the need for daily news, and warned board members that

legislators she had met with "see this as a bureaucratic squabble." (Board members had earlier referred to it as a "family quarrel" and "guerrilla warfare.") "And," she warned, "they're fed up." Outraged board members accused her of intimidation tactics. A proposal to reconsider funding for NPR died, apparently sealing the fate of weekend "All Things Considered."

CPB is increasingly unlikely to scare up any sympathy for NPR, as its board moves closer to the mindset of the ideological right. One-time Reagan campaign fundraiser Sonia Landau, now chair, has strong supporters, and a recent scandal of ideological meddling (*In These Times*, June 12) was summarized in a front-page editorial of trade magazine *Current*: "Iron Curtain falls on CPB." The ideological twist only makes financial tensions worse at public radio.

In comparison with commercial radio news, NPR still sounds pretty good, even to those who suspect it of bowing to right pressure. The length of its stories and diversity of its subjects distinguish it from the mix of headline services and talk-show blather on the air. And as NPR's room to maneuver shrinks, some staffers take comfort in the fact that right pressure has found any resistance at all inside the glass doors at M Street.

But as one staffer noted, "It's hard when all the pressure comes from the right." Seigel believed NPR hears more from the right these days because "they're just more numerous than the left." However, he urges viewers upset with NPR to contact the network rather than cutting off support for local stations—which means punishing the bearer, not the producer, of "bad news." "All complaints that come in are taken seriously," he says. And at the moment most of them come from the right.

MEDIA

In comparison with commercial radio news, NPR still sounds pretty good, even to those who suspect it of bowing to pressure from the right. The length and diversity of its subjects distinguish it from the usual on-air blather.

ition without benefit of a news peg. And then Seigel invited Otto Reich and other State officials to lunch with reporters and editors, to talk over the problem.

"You know, over there we call you guys Radio Moscow on the Potomac," Reich reportedly said in the meeting. NPR staffers defended their right to air news even when it disagreed with official reality, and countered Reich's intimidation tactics. "When he had the audacity to mention our public funded status," recalls Seigel, "I said I thought it was far more appropriate for us to get federal funds indirectly for what we do than for him to get them directly to do what he does."

Despite the tough talk, the episode appears to have had a chil-

sons unconnected with the controversy, leaving a hole in NPR's Central American coverage. The most significant effect inside NPR of the incident may be the most subtle: the message registered loud and clear from the State Department that it's just plain easier not to tackle hot stories.

The bottom line.

Political pressures may prompt NPR staffers to watch their words, but that's not the end of the problem. NPR's financial troubles contribute mightily to the bad case of caution afflicting the network's public affairs coverage.

NPR is facing the financial trouble ahead on shaky legs. The network suffered major trauma in 1983 when President Frank Man-

duced with a special grant, somehow ended up focusing on long-dead foreign policy issues like the "open skies" proposal, while Eisenhower-era subjects such as the 1953 restoration of the Shah in Iran, the 1954 Guatemalan coup and other Cold War policy decisions of the Eisenhower administration were ignored.

"You can't control the news agenda if you're cutting basic funds while getting discretionary grant funding," admits Seigel. "We're not there yet, but it's the kind of thing you're afraid of in a buyback system."

He's referring to a new funding system starting in 1987. Local stations will get directly the money the Corporation for Public Broadcasting now gives to NPR for

the time allotted. In exchange, after exhausting all other channels the union surrendered the right to strike over work standards (a right never exercised at Fremont, the UAW says). Now work standards problems will go to a management-union committee, then a board and ultimately to UAW Regional Director Bruce Lee and consultant William Usery for resolution.

Union representation.

The hallmark of the agreement is low-level resolution of conflicts and grievances, without "precedent-setting" decisions that bind the company to future standards of action. The union got more representation rights than many people expected: a full-time president and bargaining chair, four full-time international representatives and five dayshift committeepersons. The union will also assign "coordinators," one per two groups, who will handle questions and conflicts on an informal basis and off company time. UAW Region Six International representative Joel Smith sees the coordinators as a "lubricant," intervening in potentially troublesome conflicts and deciding when to involve a committeeperson.

But while the union knows its representation rights on paper, how it will function inside the plant is another question. "It's very tough, we're starting from scratch with a new type of representation and there's a lot we haven't worked out," says bargaining chair George Nano. "The jury's still out, but there have been a lot of commitments."

Perhaps the most important commitment this round was a promise to avoid layoffs except as a last resort. The contract commits NUMMI to reduce management salaries, reassign subcontracted work and solicit voluntary layoffs in a crisis, and resort to mandatory layoffs only if "compelled to do so by severe economic conditions

that threaten the long-term viability of the company." Although reasonable people could differ over what such conditions might be, Smith and Nano say only a dire economic downturn will prompt NUMMI layoffs. "You couldn't get anyone else in the industry to sign that," Smith said. "I think we're home free for the next three years."

Right now the UAW is prepared to extend NUMMI comparatively more trust because the company is enjoying unexpected

in the last decade. A new Toyota line would likely give the union even more breathing room.

Some of the union's forbearance is justified by genuine differences between NUMMI management and the rest of the auto industry. NUMMI's sales, production and profit expectations are more realistic and modest, Nano points out, which means workers are less likely to have to pay for mismanagement with layoffs and concessions. "They're not into high inventory and

jobs, how things fit together."

But the union's emphasis on cooperation with NUMMI has its critics, even within the UAW. Pete Kelly, president of Warren, Mich., Local 160, thinks the union's accord with NUMMI sets a dangerous precedent for "collaboration," one that the rest of the auto industry will try to extend. Already GM has demanded NUMMI-inspired work rules, job classification and seniority flexibility from the UAW in its new Saturn ventures, Kelly notes.



The UAW contract commits the NUMMI plant in Fremont, Calif., to reduce management salaries, reassign subcontracted work and solicit voluntary layoffs in a crisis.

success. "If there were layoffs next week, we'd all be scurrying for position," Smith acknowledges. But with sales of the NUMMI-built Chevy Nova—newspapers are terming it the "Yuppie Car of the Year"—the union has the luxury of watching how the new agreement works, without the backs-to-the-wall antagonism that has characterized auto industry labor relations

big production, unlike the Big Three," Nano said.

He's also convinced that NUMMI's commitment to sharing information with the UAW will enable the union to take an overview of the production process. "People working in the plant will understand the whole system better, and we'll understand how the company perceives our

"The union is abandoning its democratic, independent role in representation for consensus with management," Kelly believes, in a structure that encourages "competition between workers instead of solidarity."

Nano, for one, can't completely shrug off those concerns. A 20-year Fremont veteran with a reputation for shop floor militance—he was fired for his role in a 1963 wildcat strike and led the effort to fight the 1982 Fremont closure—he's not without reservations about the new system. "It's really not all peaches and cream, and in two years we may be fighting like hell. But I'd like to see how it works for now." ■

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Live Aid

Continued from page 24
ity—helping the old-fashioned way, raising money. From his hospital bed, President Ronald Reagan could applaud Live Aid as perhaps the premier example of volunteerism.

Reagan and the rest of us should share in this appreciation. But Reagan and his ideological allies, if they gave it any thought, must have been relieved at how apolitical Live Aid was. No one bothered to suggest that the superpowers re-examine their priorities that lead them to apply so much of their resources to weapons rather than food. The strongest political message of the day did not come until more than halfway through the concert, when Dick Gregory, the standard-bearer, told the crowd, "We can wipe out not only hunger, but racism, sexism and war." That's about as strong as it got at Live Aid—at least Gregory raised the concept of linkage. At JFK Stadium, the crowd was not privy to the "inspirational messages" delivered by Bishop Desmond Tutu and others on the global telecast. Few seemed to mind.

Most of the artists sang their songs and left the stage quickly, making no statement beyond their participation in the project. Bob Dylan did mumble something about hoping that some of the money raised—maybe a million or two—would go to U.S. farmers who need help with their

mortgages. Puzzling was Madonna's comment, "I'm sympathizing with you by eating my heart out." Was that a "statement"? Later, when the Thompson Twins brought her out to join them on the Beatles song, "Revolution," she did not know the words.

The day was filled with ironies. Most blatant was the piles of food refuse that grew throughout the stadium. Unmentioned was the fact that three of the corporate sponsors—each supposedly concerned with the fate of Africans—maintain operations in South Africa.

Then there was the crowd—virtually all white and mainly between 18 and 30 years old. The audience that occasionally chanted "USA, USA!" and booed the introduction of a live video feed of a Soviet band warmly welcomed the symbols of the Age of Protest. A three-song set by Crosby, Stills and Nash earned a tremendous ovation. The 90,000 were brought to their feet by "Teach Your Children" and kept there by the next act—Judas Priest.

It was a media-conscious crowd. It kept track of the mobile TV cameras, ready to be shown to a global television audience of 1.4 billion. And it came to watch television—in particular MTV, as real-life imitated MTV. Four giant screens that showed close-ups of the stage action—as well as the video feed from England, were watched more closely than the stage. (In fact, some of the crowd could not see the actual performers, their view to the stage blocked by one of the screens.)

With its dependence on state-of-the-art

video technology and a rock music video format—the screening of a new video by David Bowie and Mick Jagger was practically indistinguishable from the "live" portions of the show—Live Aid celebrated MTV culture. The Live Aid generation: We are the world. We are MTV.

As for the music, it was a mixed bag. In the afternoon, when performers in the U.S. and England traded off 20-minute segments, the Brits came out far ahead. Bryan Adams and the Beach Boys were simply no match for U2, Dire Straits (with Sting) and David Bowie. The cutting edge was on the east side of the Atlantic. On the U.S. side, highlights included Hall and Oates performing a hot Temptations medley with two of the original Temptations, Eddie Kendricks and David Ruffin. By far, what pleased the crowd the most was the reunion of Led Zeppelin.

The U.S. concert, though, truly suffered for its lack of spontaneity and immediacy. For instance, in advance it had been announced what five songs Mick Jagger would sing. The same was true for Dylan's concert-ending "Blowing in the Wind." Given only time for two, three or four songs, most acts chose the obvious.

There were some touching moments. When an announcement was made from the stage that a donated kidney had been found for a member of the audience, Stephen Fallon, who had been waiting for a transplant since March, the audience erupted into cheers. This was repeated two hours later when it was learned that Fallon

was on his way to Massachusetts General Hospital. In the afternoon, Ashford and Simpson brought out Teddy Pendergrass, who has been confined to a wheelchair since an automobile accident. Together they sang "Reach Out and Touch." Later, when Phil Collins appeared on stage, having flown the Concorde from England after playing at Wembley, he seemed to symbolize the individual effort made by so many.

But for much of the event, it was easy to lose touch with the day's *raison d'être*—world hunger. More pressing questions were at hand. Would Led Zeppelin play "Stairway to Heaven"? Would Bruce Springsteen appear?

There was an instance when Live Aid's promise to be more than merely a rock spectacular with a heart was almost realized. When the British concert ended with an ensemble singing "Do They Know It's Christmas?", the song that gave birth to "We Are the World" and Live Aid, the audience in JFK Stadium, watching the telecast, stood up and joined in the chorus: "Feed the world." At that moment, the event seemed to transcend a star-studded, high-tech telethon. One could feel actually involved in something larger, as an active participant in a truly global village. But the feeling didn't last long. Before the song was over, the feed from England was cut off—apparently to allow Tom Petty to begin his set on schedule.

David Corn writes regularly for *In These Times*.

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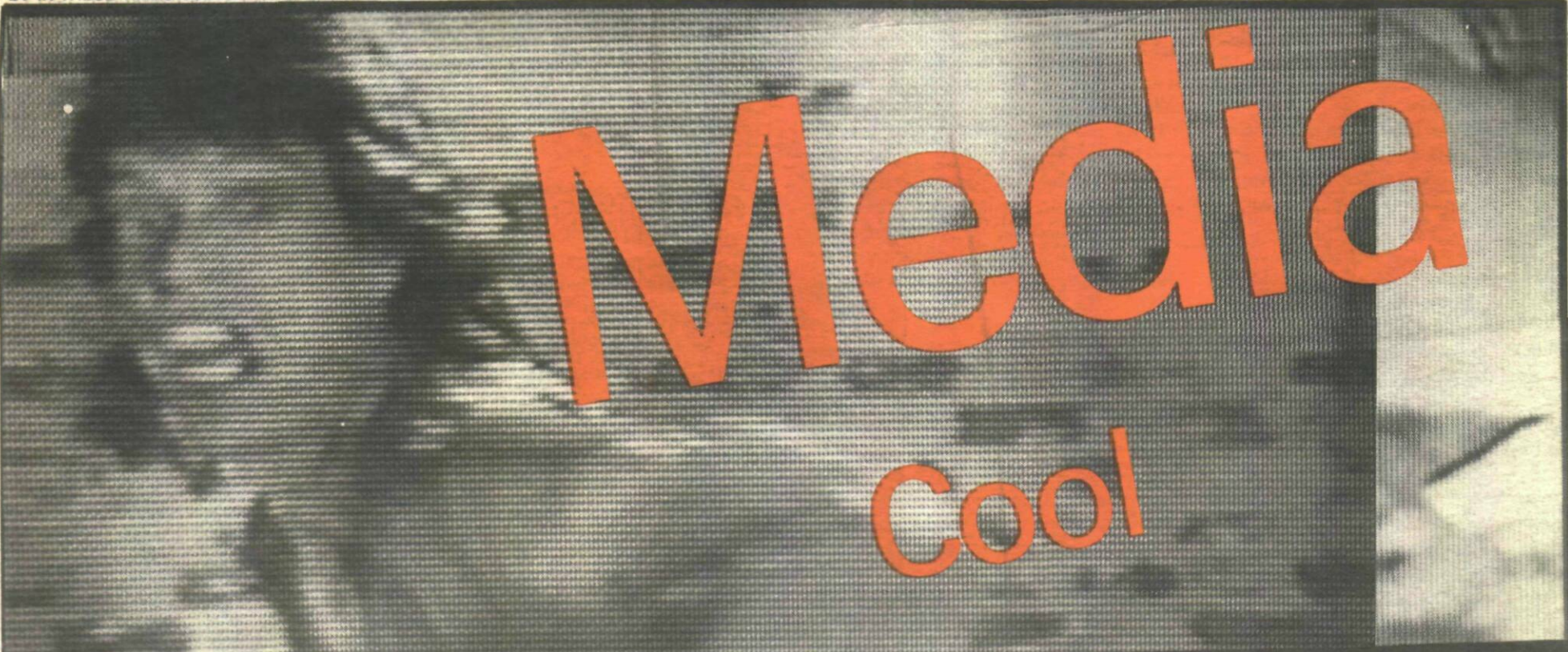
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Aid



By David Corn

BY THE TIME WE GOT TO PHILADELPHIA, we were 90,000 strong—"we" being those of us of the Live Aid generation who trekked to John F. Kennedy Stadium to witness first-hand the marathon 14-hour Live Aid benefit concert for African famine relief.

Comparisons with Woodstock—while perhaps unfair on some accounts—were unavoidable. After all, it was Joan Baez who gave in first to the temptation. At exactly 9:04 a.m. on July 13—as the minute-by-minute schedule dictated—Baez walked on to the stage, the first act of the U.S. half of the transatlantic concert. She greeted the throng before her: "Good morning, children of the '80s. This is your Woodstock, and it's long overdue."

As far as the analogies can go, she was right. It was our Woodstock. In the way that Woodstock reflected its generation, Live Aid reflected ours. But signs of cultural resistance or opposition to the powers that be were not to be found within the gates of JFK Stadium. The entire event was a video extravaganza—Jerry Lewis meets MTV on a monstrous scale. Everything was meticulously planned and staged from the first to the 840th minute, leaving little room for spontaneity. Any sense of politics—be it left or right—was absent. Nothing was asked of those who attended. We were not even requested to make donations or write our elected officials.

Corporate sponsors—AT&T, Chevrolet, Kodak and Pepsi-Cola—proudly hung their corporate banners on the stage and advertised their wares on the four giant TV screens that were set up in the stadium. At the start of the day, AT&T distributed tens of thousands of white caps emblazoned with its name, transforming the audience into a sea of AT&T logos. Imagine Woodstock brought to you by IBM.

This is not to disparage the gala and what it achieved. As the show ended, Bill Graham, the veteran rock impresario who helped to produce the benefit, announced that Live Aid, which also included a sister concert in Wembley Stadium in Great Britain, netted more than \$40 million—all of which, it was promised, would flow directly toward famine relief, through such agencies as Oxfam and Catholic Relief Services. (This figure was later revised to \$70 million.) That should save a great many lives—quite a legacy for a rock music festival. Woodstock might have aspired to something more spiritual or mystical, the promise of a harmonious Woodstock Nation. Live Aid was the epitome of practical-

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Photographs by Paul Comstock